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THE CRUISE OF THE 'FROLIC.'

THE

CRUISE OF THE 'FROLIC;'

OR,

YACHTING EXPERIENCES

OF

BARNABY BRINE, ESQ., R.N.

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BY

WILLIAM H. G. KINGSTON,

AUTHOR OF "THE PIRATE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN," "A PLEASURE TOUR IN CANADA," "BLUE JACKETS," "PETER THE WHALER," "SALT WATER," "ERNEST BRACEBRIDGE," ETC. ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. II.

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THE

CRUISE OF THE 'FROLIC.'

CHAPTER I.

A SUSPICIOUS SAIL.—THE YARN OF AN OLD SEAMAN: ZEKY NAASHON, THE JEW OF PORTSMOUTH. — AN EXPECTED VISIT FROM AN UNINVITED STRANGER.—WE PREPARE TO RECEIVE HIM.

THE Rock of Gibraltar was fading from our sight in the far distance, as the sun in a blaze of glory went down into his ocean bed between the pillars of Hercules. The yacht lay in a dead calm, her canvas idly flapping for want of more useful employment, while every spar and rope was reflected in the mirror-like surface of the watery expanse; yet she was not immovable, for the current which run in at the mouth of the Mediterranean was sending her on at the rate of some knots an hour, over the ground pretty well in her direct course. We sat on deck and smoked our cigars, and spun many a yarn, and told many an adventure of by-gone

days. It was with difficulty that we could persuade ourselves to turn in, so enjoyable was the cool sea atmosphere after the burnt-up, baked, oveny air of the old Rock.

The next morning, when we came on deck, although there had not been an air in all the heavens, as Snow informed us, we had sunk Gibraltar completely beneath the sea. That day passed much like the previous one. Now and then a light breeze from the westward filled the cutter's sails, and made her step through the water at a speed which must have astonished some of the ancient fish, which looked up at her from out of their caverned homes beneath the waves. As the day wore on we made out, away to the westward, the mast heads of a brig. As we gradually rose them it appeared that she was a polacca-rigged brig, probably a Greek laden with corn, bound out of the Straits perhaps to supply the insatiable maw of old England with food. We had just made this discovery when we were summoned to dinner. To people who have nothing to do, any small thing affords subject of interest. I remember a story of two noblemen, shut up at a country inn on a rainy day, betting large sums on the speed of two small flies running over a pane of glass, and of others equally wise, staking larger amounts than many a naval and military officer

receives in his life-time, on two spots of rain, the bet being a drawn one by the drops uniting. When we returned on deck after dinner no change had taken place. The canvas of the cutter gave every now and then an idle flap, while the sails of the Greek brig seemed very much in the same humour. We, however, were so far better off than the stranger, because the current was sweeping us, slowly indeed, but still in the direction we wanted to go, while it was carrying her away from it. Still we appeared by some mysterious influence to near each other. It was not, however, for some time that we discovered that her crew were towing her ahead, and that she had also long sweeps out, which probably sent her through the water two or three knots an hour.

"I thought those Greek seamen were idle dogs, who would not think of taking so much trouble as those fellows appear to do, even to save their lives."

"Oh, there's little enough to be said in their favour," replied Porpoise. "These fellows want to get through the Straits, as they fancy they shall find a fair wind outside, so they take a little trouble now in the hopes of perfect idleness by-and-by." Odd as it may seem, I could not help fancying that there was something strange about that brig, yet what it was of course I could not tell.

"Well, I shall always think favourably of the industry of Greeks, after watching those fellows," said Carstairs, stretching himself with a yawn. "But I say, Hearty," he continued, "this is dull work. What say you to having old Sleet aft? He promised to spin us a yarn the first time we fell in with a calm, and we have got one now with a vengeance. If he does not bring us a breeze, I vote that some one else be induced to try his hand in the same way. When we left England we agreed that we were to have all sorts of yarns, and lo and behold, a large portion of the cruise has slipped away and we have had very few."

"No fault of mine," said Hearty. "We have been so agreeable to each other, and have had so much to talk over, that we have not had time to think about the matter. However, we will lose no further time, but have old Sleet aft at once, and see what he has got to say for himself."

Old Sleet soon made his appearance, with his broad-brimmed hat in hand; giving a pull at one of his fore locks, which were already turning grey, and a nautical scrape with his foot backwards on the deck. When told for what he was wanted, the old man blushed, and hummed and hawed a little, while he considered what sort of a yarn he should spin us. At length, a bright idea seemed to strike him, and he clapped his hand on

his thigh, then squirting out a stream of tobacco-juice into the sea, and the remnant of a quid, he cleared his throat and thus began:—

ZEKY NAASHON, THE JEW OF PORTSMOUTH.

"Did you ever hear tell of Zeky Naashon, gen'men? as cunning an old Jew, he was, as ever sold slops, and passed off pinchbeck watches as gold ones, on board a man-o'-war in Portsmouth harbour? But now I come to think of it, I don't suppose you ever did, seeing as how, if he had lived to count a hundred years, which he didn't, he'd have been dead long before any on you was born. At one time there wasn't many who ever set foot on the Point, or Common Hard either, who didn't know old Zeky; but let me see, that was when I was a younker, and most of the gay fellows I knew then have slipped their cables one after t'other for a wider berth than we've got in this world. Ay, gen'men, them *was* times to live in, when plenty of the shiners was to be had for a little fighting, and there was plenty of ways to spend them, but now it's hard work to get an honest penny any way. I'd like to see them times over again, that I would; but it's no use wishing for them, they are gone, and will no more come back than a thirty-two pound shot would float up from

the bottom of the Atlantic. But I'm all adrift again. Then you never heard tell of old Zeky, gen'men ?"

"No," answered Hearty to his question. "I never heard, as it happens, till this moment that Portsmouth ever contained such a personage as Zeky Naashon."

"Now I mind, sir, it's not probable that you should, for the reasons I have said. Well, sir, there wasn't such a Jew in all Portsmouth—and there were not a few on 'em there—for turning a penny. There wasn't a thing in the universal world Zeky hadn't got to sell, always except a little honesty, and for the matter o' that, he'd have had hard work to find it among his commodities; and there wasn't many things he wouldn't buy, at his own price, except the honesty I spoke of, because you know that isn't to be bought; if it was, why he'd have given just nothing for it, because as how he didn't know its value. No sooner did a ship from a foreign station drop her anchor at Spithead, and shore-boats was allowed to come alongside, than Zeky was to be found with his wares spread out between two guns on the main deck, driving a brisk trade with all on board. He'd got everything among his goods from a sou'-wester to a shoe-tie for the men, and from a ear-ring to a petticoat for the gals. Lord, he'd rig Moll out with new gear from truck to kelson in no

time, and many's the dirty-looking drab has come on board not fit to be seen, and gone on shore again as fine as a princess in her holiday suit;—Jack, you see, sir, paid for all. Zeky, why he took the cast-offs in exchange. He'd got no end of slops—hats and shoes, and jackets and trousers, and handkerchiefs of all sorts and colours; then he'd watches, and buckles, and ear-rings (for in them days most seamen wore them, as well as pigtails, and love-locks, and more's the pity, to my thinking, that they've almost gone out of fashion—that's to say of the matter of pigtails—one does see ear-rings and love-locks now and then, and I like the look on 'em—they reminds me of old days); then as I said afor, he'd rings and seals, and baccy-boxes, and scissors, and needles, and thread, and knives without end, and brooches, and women's ear-rings, and bonnets, and all sorts of female gear, of which in my life I never could remember the names rightly, except such as belongs to a ship;—by the same token you knows we are fond of rigging our sweethearts and ships much in the same way, and taking as good care of them. I likes to see them with bonnets on, stays well set up, and canvas spread on both sides, walking along at ten knots an hour before a spanking nor'-easter."

"Avast there! where are you drifting to now?"

sang out Hearty; "are you talking of a woman or a ship?"

"Of both, sir, both. I love 'em both, that I do. And when I thinks of one, the other isn't far off in my mind. For if there was no women there'd be no ships."

"And if there were no ships, there would, by the same rule, be no women," observed Hearty, laughing.

"No, sir, there wouldn't, *that* I can swear," he answered, positively; "because, if there was one unnat'ral thing, I doesn't see why there shouldn't be another, and the world couldn't get on without ships, that's certain. But as you was asking about Zeky, sir—well, sir, he'd buy anything the men brought home; and rum things some on 'em were; and then he'd take all their old clothes off their hands, and, more than likely, sell them again to the same men as bran new. Then he was always accommodating to lend the officers, and men for that matter, as much money as they wanted, provided they gave him what he called security, which, to my eye, seemed only slips of paper, but, somehow or another, he always contrived to squeeze their pockets pretty dry before he'd have done with them. Now I don't say, on any manner of account, that all Jews are like Zeky, for I've known several very decent, Christian-like chaps,

among 'em, so I means nothing disrespectful to any on 'em; but you know, sir, there are rogues among all nations; for if there wasn't, one wouldn't be able to tell who was honest. Howsomedever, with respect to Zeky, if there ever was a big rogue, he was one to a sartanty. He did look like one, too, or I don't know who does; though nobody had a softer tongue, nor more 'sinivating manners than he. He had been many years in trade, and had now grown old; so he was rather bent in his figure, and wore a long white beard, or rather it weren't white, but a yellowish dirty-brown colour. His nose was a rummish looking ornament, stuck on to the middle of his face, for all the world like a hawk's beak, with a twinkling eye on each side of it, which looked so black and piercing, that one couldn't help thinking that he'd filched them from the same bird, or mayhap swapped 'em for a consideration of some sort or another. I don't know where he got his teeth from, except out of the jaws of a mangy cat, for I never saw any flying thing with 'em, except it were a bat, to which his mouth weren't altogether unlike. You may suppose, sir, he wasn't considered much of a beauty; yet, though he was known to be as big a rogue as ever breathed, he contrived to have dealings with everybody, and everybody courted his favour, though he spit upon them,

and they hated him; but the truth is, they were afraid on him, and he was rich. Many's the man who treats the world, and the world treats, like old Zeky Naashon.

"Now comes the wonderful part of my story. All on a sudden Zeky disappeared, and no one knew what had become of him. His house was shut up, and his stock in trade sold off, all except a few old shoes and some cracked pitchers which no one would give nothing for at no price. He'd got in all his debts, but I'm not quite so sure he'd paid all he owed, so people never expected to see old Zeky back at Portsmouth again. Why he went was equally a mystery. Some people whispered one thing some another; some said he'd been discovered defrauding the revenue, which is more than likely, seeing he'd been doing it all his life; others said he'd been making false money, or forging, or robbing some one again' the law, or, at all events, lighting a fire for old Nick, which had made the country too hot to hold him. Yet all the world knows that he never came back again. There was no lack of Jews in Portsmouth to carry on his trade, though I doubt if there was ever a more cunning rogue escaped the gallows than old Zeky, for the simple reason because he weren't born to be hung. What he was born to I'm going to tell you.

"I had almost forgotten all about old Zeky, for

you see, sir, I was a mere slip of a lad when he lived, when a circumstance happened which brought him back to my recollection. It was about seven or eight years afterwards, I mind: I had not long come home from sea, and was stopping with my old father, who lived in those days on the coast of Dorsetshire, not far from Corfe Castle. He didn't think there was any harm in doing a bit of free-trade now and then hisself, and as for me, it never came across my mind that there was any harm whatsomever in it. So it happened, there's no use denying it, it was towards the end of November, when the days were getting very short and dark, and the weather very wild, that notice was given to us that a crop was to be run, and our assistance asked to get the goods on shore. Of course, we couldn't refuse, and to make short of it, most of our men were engaged on the beach, when down came a troop of dragoons upon them, and a party of custom-house officers, which weren't like the revenue men of these days, mostly regular built seamen and honest fellows. Our people showed fight, and several on 'em was hurt, but at last they were obliged to cut their sticks, and run for their lives. My father and two of my brothers and I had been up to hide away some of the things at a place not far from our cottage, and were just returning when

we heard the firing, and soon afterwards met two or three fellows running as hard as their legs would carry them away from the soldiers. We was thinking of getting back to our own cottage, and stowing ourselves away in bed, but we agreed we'd go a little further to see what was going on. We had got close down to the beach when father stumbled over something, and came right down on his face. We heard a deep groan when he fell, and thought it was him who uttered it, but when we picked him up again, we found he wasn't hurt, and that the sound proceeded from some one lying wounded on the ground. When we came to examine what was the matter with the stranger, we discovered that blood was gushing forth from a deep wound in his side, soaking right through his Guernsey frock, and thick Flushing jacket; so we agreed that if he wasn't quickly attended to he would be dead, and as our cottage was the nearest, we had better take him there. We accordingly carried him up at once, and laid him on father's bed, and then, getting at the wound, we bound it up as well as we could to staunch the blood. He had got an ugly blow on his head which had stunned him, but he soon recovered his senses, and when he heard that we were going to send for the doctor he wouldn't let us, saying that it was of no manner of use, for that he'd got his

sailing orders, and should be slipping his cable before he could possibly arrive. He was a stout, strong-looking man, somewhere about forty or fifty years old, and had on a thick suit of Flushing, with high boots to keep out the cold and damp. He was now pale as death; but his voice, though rather husky, was as strong as most men's. He and father knowed each other, it seems, and father afterwards said he had always been a wildish sort of a chap, but not so bad as he made himself out. He had belonged to the lugger which run the crop, but having landed, met his fate from the pistol of one of the dragoons. You'll be axing what all this has to do with old Zeky, now I'll tell you, sir.

"When we was going to fetch the doctor, 'Don't go,' says he, 'it's no manner of use; neither he, nor any man, can caulk my seams fast enough to keep me afloat, but if there was a parson within hail, I've got something on my mind which I should like to get clear off before I slips.'

"Now it happened that there wasn't a parson within ten mile of us, and the chances were that he wouldn't be at home if we sent. So father told him, and axed him if he wouldn't do as well.

"'I can't say as how you are much like a parson, 'Sleet,' he answered; 'but seeing we've been ship-

mates together, and always good friends, I'd rather unburden my mind to you nor to any one else, and mayhap what I say may not be thrown away on your youngsters there. It was just such a night as this, seven years ago, all but one day, I was sitting in my cottage making a lobster pot, while my wife was in a low chair opposite to me mending my Guernsey frock before the fire, and my three children were just put to bed, when I heard several taps at the door. I lived then, as you know, Jim, at Hamble. You remember the cottage close down to the river. I had then, with five others, a share in a cutter of thirty tons, called the 'Pout,' in which we used to go over to Guernsey for lobsters, and do any other odd jobs which came in our way, we were no ways particular.

"'As you've often heard, gen'men, the Hamble men never had the best of names, and Heaven knows they don't deserve more than they've got. I can scarcely tell why, but so it was, if there was any mischief anywhere, a Hamble man was sure to have a finger in it. Their craft, too, were fast vessels, and were not only engaged in smuggling, but in the war time were as well known in the French harbours as mounseer's own Chassé Marées, for they used to carry our information to Jean Crapeau of all that was going forward at home, and get well paid for it you may be sure.

"'Well, we was to sail the next morning with the first of the ebb, for Guernsey, and I was just thinking of turning in to be up betimes, when I heard the knocking at my door, 'Who's there?' I asked, taking a hanger, which hung over the fire-place in my hand, for in those days it wasn't quite safe in a lone place to open one's door at night to a stranger. 'Who's there?' I sung out.

"'Let me in, my friendsh; God of Abrahamsh, I shall die of cold and wet if you keep me standing out longer in the rain,' answered a voice from without.

"'What's your name, my friend?' I asked in return, though I thought I knew the voice.

"'Zeky Naashon,' answered the voice without, 'have pity upon a poor old Jew.'

"'Ho, ho,' I thought, 'is it you, my jewel?' for I had a few little dealings with him not long before, and hadn't many doubts but that he had cheated me though I couldn't bring it home to him; so I opened the door and let him enter. In he came all dripping with wet, and tottering under the weight of a large box he carried on his back, such as hawkers keep their spices in. It was so heavy, I know, that I wonder he could have carried it so many miles as he had done, all the way over from Portsmouth.

"'Well, Zeky, what is it you want with me?' I

asked, after he had hung his outer coat before the fire to dry, and set down to rest himself.

"'Oh, God of Abrahamsh, I am a poor old Jew, and ruined, quite ruined,' he began.

"'I am sorry to hear it, Zeky,' I answered, though I didn't believe him.

"'It's a sad thing, a sad thing for a poor old man like me, but I'll tell you what I want to do. I want to get over to Rotterdam or Antwerp, or one of those places by to-morrow, or next day, and will pay you out of my small means if you will carry me there in your cutter.'

"'I told him that I'd no objection, and I didn't suppose the rest of us would, if he'd make it worth our while. He offered two pounds at first, but I told him he'd have to wait long enough in England before he got anybody to carry him where he wanted to go under ten, and at last he agreed to give that sum. He wouldn't turn in all night, I remember, but sat up before the fire warming himself with his feet on his box, for he wouldn't let it out of his sight for a moment. Do you know, Jim, I've often seen him sitting in the same place, night after night, though I know'd perfectly well he wasn't there. Yet it was just like reality; there he would be with his feet on his box, and his chin almost bent down to his knees, his

long beard and white hair streaming with wet, and the palms of his hands turned up to warm at the fire, his twinkling eyes shining all the time, just for all the world like two hot coals. But I'm getting ahead of my story. Well, I couldn't go to sleep, myself, all night for thinking what a pity it was I hadn't made old Zeky pay more for his passage, as I knew to a certainty that he had been after some roguery or other, and would rather have given twice the sum than remained on shore, and perhaps have been sent to prison or been hung. However, a bargain's a bargain, so next morning we was up before daylight and aboard. I told the rest what I'd done, and they of course agreed to take the Jew wherever he wanted to go, though they grumbled at my not having asked more for his passage.

"'It was scarcely light when we got under weigh and beat out of Hamble Creek, with the wind at sou'-west, blowing rather fresh, and the weather thick and dirty. The Jew had stowed himself away below as soon as he got on board, and there he sat, just as he had done at my cottage, before the fireplace in the little cabin, moaning and groaning, and talking of his poverty. When we got off Calshot Castle, he popped his head up the companion hatch, just to see how we were getting on; but when we told him, just for a joke,

that there was some one looking at him with a spy-glass from the top of the castle, down he dived again in no end of a hurry, trembling all over like a jelly-fish, and his teeth chattering as if they would jump down his throat. Seeing this, we all felt certain that he knew the beaks were after him, and that he was afraid of being nabbed for something or other he had done. He was in such a fright that he didn't venture to show again till, after running out at St. Helen's, we were a good two miles clear of the Wight. He then came on deck again, either because he found it close below, or didn't like his own company; and now thinking himself safe, his spirits rose so much that he began to joke and chuckle in his own peculiar way.

"'Ha, ha, my shons, you have a verish pretty craft, verish pretty. She would run away from a king's cutter, like lightning. Ha, ha!'

"'Ay, ay, Zeky; faster nor that too, if we had tubs or silks on board, or anything of value,' I answered; 'but now, of course, if one was to chase us, we'd let her overhaul us directly, and mayhap she wouldn't take the same trouble again when we had really got something on board. You understand that, Zeky, don't you?'

"On hearing this, he was in a great taking, and swore we shouldn't get anything from him if any

cutter came near us. As luck would have it, not ten minutes after he had said this, the mist cleared away a little to the west'ard, and we made out a large cutter at the back of the island, standing to the east'ard. We soon saw that she was the 'Scout,' one of the fastest cruisers, as you remember, on the station. We, however, had nothing else to do but to stand steadily on, for if we had shown signs of flight, she, of course, would have been after us. The Jew took it very differently to us, and I never saw a poor wretch in such a fright, for he made sure the cutter was sent to look after him. To us it mattered nothing, for even if the cutter had boarded us, she could do nothing with us, and as for the Jew, none of us supposed that her people would have taken any notice of him; so leaving one man at the helm, and another to keep a look-out a-head, while Zeky was holding on to the weather bulwarks, with his eye to windward to watch what the king's cutter was about, the other four of us went below to smoke a pipe, and to take a drop of something to drink. While we was sitting round the fire, for it was bitterly cold for the time of year, as the devil would have it, our eyes fell on the Jew's strong box.

"'I wonder if that ere box is full of gold,' said Joe Hudson, our skipper, blowing a cloud of smoke round

his face, to hide the expression which he felt was in his countenance.

"'The words he spoke were simple enough, but somehow or other there was something in the tones of his voice which made us all know what was passing in his mind. We looked just down on the deck of the cabin, then our eyes met, but no one for some time dared to speak a word.

"'It seems very heavy,' said Joe, wanting to get an answer from some of us.

"'Maybe it is,' said Bill Davis, 'I didn't lift it.'

"'Those words were enough to break the spell.

"'I never felt a box so heavy, for its size,' says I, to Joe Hudson.

"'The Jew seems to set great store on it,' he answered.

"'He sat up, and watched it all last night,' says I.

"'I wonder what he intends to do with so much gold,' says Bill, 'if it is gold.'

"'Oh, he'll go and settle down in Germany, and turn gentleman, after cheating honest Englishmen all his life,' says Joe.

"'The box must hold some thousand pounds,' says I.

"'Yes, it's very heavy,' observes Joe, quietly.

"'It's a pity,' says Davis.

"'What's a pity?' I axes.

"'That a Jew should be so rich,' says he, quickly.

"'It is,' says Hudson.

"'There are many rich rogues,' says I.

"'There are,' says Joe.

"'Come,' sung out Tom Hawker, who was always a wild dare-devil chap, 'what are you shilly-shallying, and backing and filling that way? Why can't you speak out, like men, and say what you do mean? Why can't you say you want the Jew's money?—it'll come to that.'

"'But no one said we wanted the Jew's money,' said Hudson, repeating his words.

"'*Said!*—no one *said*—but we *thought* it,' says Tom. 'Why should we be afraid to speak out?'

"'Hush! hush!' says Joe, 'the Jew will hear you.'

"'What am I to be afraid of the Jew for?' axes Tom, with some briskness; 'he's more cause to be afraid of *us*. No one *said* we wanted his money—but we all *do* want it.'

"'How are we to get it?' axes Hudson, coming to the point.

"'Run down channel, and land him on the coast of Cornwall,' says I: 'he'll be afraid of coming back Portsmouth way to look for his money.'

"'Not he,' says Hudson; 'he'd venture into —— to get it; and depend upon it, if we land him in England, we shall be blown upon.'

"'Then put him on shore in France,' says Davis, 'he won't give us much trouble there.'

"'You don't know how a Jew loves his money, Bill, or you wouldn't say that,' says Joe. 'Why he'd follow us from one end of the world to the other to look for it, while he'd got a leg to walk with.'

"'Then land him in the middle of the Channel,' says Tom; 'he'll not come back from there to trouble us, I'll warrant.'

"'What do you mean?' axes Hudson, all in a fluster, though it *was* what *he hisself* had been thinking on.

"'What do I mean! why, that dead men tells no tales,' answers Tom, boldly; 'that's what I mean. I likes to speak out, instead of tacking about in the way you three have been doing.'

"'Why, that would be murder,' says Davis, with his teeth going; for he was a timid man, though not a bit better nor the rest on us: he was afraid of being a villain.

"'Murder be hanged,' says Tom, 'it would only be the murder of a Jew; and who is to know anything about it if we keep a quiet tongue in our heads?'

"'What will Jim and Sam say to it?' axes I. 'We han't consulted them.'

"'There's no need of axing them,' says Hudson; 'we may do it as if it was done by chance, and no one be a bit the wiser for it.'

"'How?' says Tom Hawker, tipping the wink to me, for he knowed all along what Hudson was driving at, for he was a precious old villain, there's no denying it.

"'I'll show you,' says Hudson, 'when the time comes, if we are all agreed.'

"'I am,' says Tom, 'if the d——l take me for it.'

"'And I,' says I.

"'And I,' says Davis, 'only I hope we shan't be found out.'

"'Well then,' says Hudson, 'the matter's settled.'

"'We didn't say another word, but went on deck directly. There was the Jew, holding on by the weather-bulwarks, and looking with all his eyes at the cutter, which came bowling along after us; but as our craft was a fast one, she didn't gain much on us.

"'Oh, mein Gosh! mein Gosh!' sung out old Zeky, 'that cutter will overtake us. Mein good captainsh, can't you clap on more sail, and get away from her?'

"'That would only make her think there was something wrong,' answered Hudson; 'we'd much better take in two reefs in our mainsail, and haul down the foresail, and she'll soon pass us. To my mind, she's only standing the same course we are, and perhaps is after one of those sail ahead.'

"'If dat is she, if de offisher should come on board, I will turn in and pretend to be a shick man,' says Zeky, who rather liked the thought of playing a trick in any way.

"'Down with you, then,' says Hudson, 'and we will let you know when the cutter has passed us.'

"'Accordingly, Zeky dived down below, and turned into one of our berths, where we covered him up all but his head with a blanket. There he lay, his sharp eyes twinkling away like two sparks of fire, and his teeth chattering through cold and fright. As it was coming on to blow pretty fresh, and the sea was getting up, we had a good excuse for shortening sail, and the cutter which wasn't thinking all the time a bit about us, soon passed ahead. When we told this to Zeky, he turned out of his berth, and after taking a look at his money-box, he came on deck again, rubbing his hands at the thought of being safe. He little knew what was in store for him. The wind had been shifting about for some time, and now settled down in

the nor'-west, blowing big guns; the black heavy seas came rolling along after us, topped with white foaming heads. At the same time it came on again thick and dirty, and there wasn't anywhere another sail to be seen.

"'This will do for us,' says Hudson, walking for'ard with Hawker, so as to be out of ear-shot of the Jew. 'Do you, Tom,' says he, 'take the helm, and we'll tell Sam and Jim to go below; then we'll get the Jew to sit up on the companion, and if the sail jibes and the boom knocks him overboard, it's no fault of ours.'

"'I understand ye,' answered Tom, 'but for my part, if I had the management, I'd, without more ado, heave him neck and heels into the sea. There's no cheating the devil, you know.'

"No sooner had Sam and Jim gone below, than Joe Hudson ranges up alongside Zeky, and says he,

"'You'll be more comfortable, and out of the way, Zeky, if you sits up there on the companion-hatch.'

"Zeky didn't much like moving, but when we told him that if a sea came on board he'd be safer there, up he got, staying himself up with both his arms. We was now, you knows, running right afor' the wind, with two reefs down in the mainsail, tumbling about like a drunken duck. Tom was at the helm. Hudson,

Davis, and I, went for'ard. There sat the Jew, little thinking that his hour had come.

"'Will it do?' sung out Tom. 'Will it do?'

"'Mind your helm!' says Hudson.

"Tom knew what that meant. Over came the heavy boom—crash—it struck the old Jew right amidships, and carried him away like a feather into the boiling sea. He gave one loud, dreadful shriek. I never heard anything like it, and often's the time it has rung in my ears since in many a heavy gale, till I've thought I saw the old man perishing before my eyes. Sam and Jim rushed on deck.

"'What's that?' says they, frightened to death.

"'The Jew overboard!' sung out Hudson.

"'Oh, mein Gosh, mein Gosh; shave me!' cried the Jew, for a wide gown he had on kept him floating high out of the water; and if ever I saw a horrid face, it was his.

"'Swim on board!' answers Tom, laughing.

"The cutter shot by him, and there he was bobbing about his head and arms just out of water, shrieking for help among the tumbling, foaming waves.

"'He's a following the vessel, and is going to haunt us for ever!' sung out Davis, in a dreadful fright.

"And sure enough, as we looked, there was the Jew following in our wake, with a mass of foam bubbling and hissing round him. Even Joe Hudson didn't like the look of it, and Jim and Sam were ready to die with fright.

"'Oh, take me on board! take me on board, kind men, and you shall have von half of all de little monish I have got at home!' cried Zeky, as loud as the salt water would let him.

"'Thank you for nothing, Mr. Naashon,' answered Tom Hawker, jeering at him.

"'Ay, ay, we'll haul you on board! What are you staring at?' he says, looking at Davis.

"'Don't you see the Jew's got hold of a warp which that lubber, Sam Jones, left towing overboard.'

"So it was; and it was wondersome how fast the Jew held on. He didn't like to part with his gold.

"'You shall have all my monish; all, all, all!' sung out Zeky, in his agony.

"'Haul him on board,' says Hudson, giving a look at Tom, while he took the helm.

"Tom understood him, and slackened the warp several fathoms. The old man felt the strain taken off his arms, and didn't gripe hold as fast as before.

"'Now haul away, and get the Jew on board!' cries Tom.

"We hauled away. Suddenly the rope tautened again; the strain was more than he could resist. With a loud shriek, he let go. As he dropped astern, he threw up his arms grasping at nothing, and when he found that there was no chance for him, he turned to and cursed every mother's son of us in his own tongue; the sound of his screeching voice ringing in our ears, till the waves washed over him, and he sank for ever. Oh those curses didn't go for nothing, as you shall hear. They were fearsome things. None of us spoke for some time, for the murder was on the conscience of all.

"Tom Hawker braved it the best. 'Well,' says he, after we'd run on some way, 'since the Jew's overboard, as we are his heirs, we may as well see what he's left us in his strong box. He said he'd give us it all if we'd haul him on board. We did haul, only he chose to let go, which was no fault of ours, you know.'

"On this we all laughed, and heaving the cutter to, went down below, all six of us, to open his box. We weren't long in knocking the cover off, when instead of finding a box full of gold, the greater part of it was in crowns and shillings, and all sorts of ornaments, and precious stones, which weren't of much use to us, as we didn't know their value. Then there was whole handfuls of copper, which he hadn't time to get

changed, I suspect, but not more than eighty sovereigns in gold, though there was several strips of paper which Hudson said was bills of exchange, but we were afraid of doing anything with them, so we tore them up and threw them overboard. After all we didn't get fifty pounds apiece, and for this we had sold our souls to the devil. Little good came of it, you may be sure, for the money was soon gone, and nothing remained but the thoughts of the cursed deed. Well, when we'd divided the money, and cut the box up and burnt it, we shaped a course for Guernsey. We there took in the cargo of lobsters we first intended to go for, and returned to Hamble.

"When we got home we couldn't bear the look of each other's faces, for in truth, I believe we was afraid of one another, so we sold the cutter, and all went different ways. Now it's a fact not one of us six will have died a natural death. Tom Hawker went out to the West Indies, and I heard, not two years after, that he was hung as a pirate, at Port Royal, in Jamaica. Joe Hudson got triced up too, about the same time, on the Isle of Dogs, for shooting a revenue-officer. Sam and Jim Jones was both run down in a fishing-boat at sea and never heard of more. Davis was pressed on board a man-o'-war, and fell overboard in a gale of wind, when no boat could be lowered to pick him up, and

here am I, the last of the six, just slipping my cable with a pistol shot in my side.

"'There, Jim, I've unburdened my mind to you, and I hopes your youngsters will take warning from my fate.'

"The dying man held on till morning, groaning with pain, and sometimes raving about the Jew, whom he declared he saw sitting before the fire warming his hands and turning round his burning eyes towards him.

"Just as the first faint streaks of light appeared in the sky he sat bolt upright in bed, with his arms stretched out, and sang out, 'Haul away, haul away, ye devils, or I can't hold on any longer.' Then suddenly he fell back, the rattle was heard in his throat, and he was dead. He evidently thought himself the drowning Jew.

"There, gen'men," concluded old Sleet, "that's the way how I knowed for a sartainty what became of Zeky Naashon, the Jew of Portsmouth."

Old Sleet's story met with the applause it deserved. Whatever were its other merits, it had that of brevity, which is said to be the soul of wit.

No alteration had taken place in the weather while the old man was telling his tale. The strange brig, however, kept creeping up closer and closer to us;

still, except an occasional glance which we took of her, as being the only object in sight, she appeared in no way to excite the interest of my messmates. I, however, as I before remarked, clearly remember to have had a strange feeling of doubt and mistrust as I looked at her. It is impossible to account for similar sensations, experienced frequently by people on various occasions; had she been a rakish-looking, low, black schooner, with a wide spread of canvas, met with in the latitude of the West Indies, I might very naturally have guessed her to be a pirate or slaver; but the brig in sight was a harmless, honest-looking trader, and still I could not help frequently during the day looking at her very much as I should have done had she been of the character of the craft I had described.

"Bubble!" exclaimed Hearty, "you know that you have promised us a tale of your own composition, and you have very frequently been missed from the deck and found pen in hand in the cabin, covering sundry sheets of paper, and when we have been wrapped in slumber you have been supposed to have sat up continuing your work. Come, man, have compassion on our curiosity, and give us the result of your lucubrations."

"Oh, no! spare my blushes," answered Will, with a comic sentimental look; "I don't aim at the world-

wide celebrity of an author; I am content to please a select circle of friends like yourselves. Who would read a story published under the signature of Will Bubble? No! I say, let me float on adown the quiet stream of insignificance. The post of safety is a humble station—hum!"

"Over-modesty, over-modesty, Will," answered Hearty. "Pluck up courage, man, you'll do well if you try."

The best of the joke was, that the rogue, as I well know, had for many a year past been dabbling in literature, and often had I enjoyed a quiet laugh when reading an article from his pen.

"Well, perhaps some day I'll try," said he, demurely.

"Hillo! what can the fellow be wanting?" exclaimed Porpoise, interrupting our talking (I won't call it conversation).

We all turned our eyes in the direction in which he was looking. The brig had lowered a boat, which with rapid strokes was pulling towards us.

"She seems to have a good many hands in her," he added, holding his glass to his eye. "I don't quite like the look of her."

"Nor do I either, I confess," said I. "There are some craft in this sea not altogether honest, we must

remember, though they are generally met with higher up towards the Levant."

"What ought we to do, then?" asked Hearty.

"Just serve out the cutlasses and pistols, and cast the guns loose," said Porpoise. "Tell the people to keep an eye on the strangers, and if more than two or three attempt to come on board, to tumble them into their boat again. There's not the slightest danger if we put on a bold front, but if we were caught napping, I would not be answerable for the consequences."

CHAPTER II.

THE STRANGER COMES ON BOARD.—THE GREEK CHIEF.—A WHITE SQUALL.—WHAT HAS BECOME OF THE BRIG?—THE SUSPICIOUS STRANGER AGAIN.—PREPARATIONS FOR A FIGHT.

THE advice Porpoise gave seemed so rational that although it might have gone somewhat against the grain with so thorough a John Bull as Hearty to put himself in a posture of defence before he was attacked, Snow was summoned aft to superintend the distribution of the contents of the arm-chest. The men buckled on their cutlasses with looks of no small glee, snapping the locks of their pistols to try them before loading, as they eyed the advancing boat.

"There's no fear, gentlemen, but what they'd give an account of twice the number of chaps as are aboard that craft, if they ever came to close quarters," said Snow, approvingly casting his eye over the crew.

I could not help thinking the same, for a finer set of broad-shouldered, wide-chested fellows, I never saw,

as they stood around us with their necks bare, and the sleeves of their blue shirts tucked up above the elbows, handling their weapons with the fond look which a child bestows on a newly given toy.

"Go forward again, my men, and keep on the opposite side to which the boat comes," said Porpoise.

"Just stand about as if you did not suspect there was anything wrong; very likely there may not be, you know, and perhaps the Greek has lost his reckoning, and is sending a-board us only to ask his whereabouts."

"A craft like that wouldn't send away a boat with twelve men in her, or more, to ask such a question," observed Snow to old Sleet; "I know better nor that."

"You may well say so," answered the old man. "I've heard of such rum tricks being played, that I always like to be prepared for squalls."

I must say that after the strange misgivings I had experienced in the early part of the day, when the polacre brig first hove in sight, I was well satisfied to see the yacht put in a perfect state of defence. It was more than possible that the stranger might after all be an honest trader, and that her crew might be not a little surprised to find an English yacht with so formidable an appearance. Still again, I have always

seen the wisdom of not despising an antagonist, and of being as prepared as circumstances will allow for any emergency.

The boat, a heavy launch, was meantime advancing towards us. I examined her narrowly with my glass; she had what looked very like a gun mounted in the bows, though a capote, or piece of dark canvas was thrown over it. She pulled twelve oars, besides which, three or four other people sat in the stern sheets. I observed Porpoise, who had been, as may be supposed, attentively watching the boat, go up to the foremost gun, and draw the shot.

"Carpenter," said he, to Chips, "bring me up a shovel of old nails, and bits of iron."

The articles in question were soon brought to him, and he proceeded forthwith to load the gun with them up to the muzzle.

"Sleet," said he, "you have charge of this gun: if our friends there show fight, and I give the word, slap this mouthful right in among them; it will soon bring them to reason, I guess."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the old man, slapping the breach of his gun with a quiet smile, "I'll make her speak, depend on't."

Thus prepared, we awaited the arrival of the suspicious-looking strangers. Had there been any wind,

we might easily have prevented their coming on board, by running out of their way, but as it was we could not help ourselves without fighting. In a few minutes more they pulled alongside, rather awkwardly; however, we did not order them to keep off, as it was agreed it would not be wise to show any suspicion of them. They were all dressed in the Greek costume: one of the men who sat in the stern sheets, a full-bearded fellow, with a capote thrown over his shoulders, and a fez on his head, stood up in the boat, and in broken English asked to come on board.

"Oh! let him," said Hearty, who began to fancy we had been over cautious. "There can't possibly be any harm."

The side was accordingly manned, and our friend with the capote, followed by two less ill-looking fellows, stepped unceremoniously on board.

"I speak to de captain," said the stranger, in a blunt tone.

"I am the captain, at your service," answered Porpoise, standing before him, and preventing his further advance on deck.

"Oh! I come to know where you come from," said the Greek stranger, casting his eyes furtively round the deck, as if to discover the state of defence in which we might be.

The look of our sturdy fellows with their cutlasses by their sides might possibly have surprised him, and at all events he must have seen that there was little chance of surprising us.

"We come from England," answered Porpoise, bluntly. "A civil question requires a civil answer, but I don't know by what right you ask it."

"Where you bound for?" continued the Greek, not noticing the last remark it seemed.

"Malta, Alexandria, Smyrna, and a few other places up the Levant," said Porpoise.

"Ah! will you take letter for me? You do me great favour," said the Greek, putting his hand in his bosom.

While the Greek was speaking, I had been eyeing him narrowly from the after-part of the vessel where I had placed myself. Most of my readers have heard of the famed Vanderdecken, the terrible Flying Dutchman, who in his phantom ship goes cruising about to the southward of the Cape of Good Hope, sailing right into the eye of the heaviest gale. When he falls in with a vessel, he comes aboard, and requests that a packet he presents may be taken on shore. Just such another as Vanderdecken did our present visitor appear, except that the Dutchman is habited in a somewhat different costume to the Greek, in broad

brimmed hat, big-buttoned waistcoat, and wide breeches. By the way Porpoise looked at him, I had a notion some such idea was passing through his mind. Perhaps he suspected that the gentleman had a pistol instead of a letter inside the folds of his vest. The boat's crew meantime sat scowling at us, and surveying the vessel with a no very friendly look: I guessed, indeed, that nothing would have given them greater pleasure than to have been able to jump on board, and to cut all our throats.

"We shall be happy to take your letter or any commands on shore," answered Porpoise, putting his hand in his pocket in imitation of the Greek.

The stranger furtively eyed the movement of his hand, as much as to say, "Why, have you got a pistol there likewise?"

However, withdrawing his own hand from his bosom, he exclaimed, "Ah! I have by some omission left my letter on board."

The man spoke with as downright an English pronounciation as I ever heard in my life. Pretty well for a Greek, thought I, stepping forward to examine his features more narrowly. I had had my suspicions from the time he stepped on board, so, it appeared, had Tom Newton. There could be very little doubt about the matter; the man who stood before us in the

guise of a Greek, was no other than the ci-devant pirate—slaver—smuggler, the outlaw Miles Sandgate. I thought his keen eye glanced at my countenance for a moment, as if he recognized me; but so completely did he maintain his self-possession, that he did not exhibit the slightest sign of fear or hesitation. He bit his lips though, as if he found that he had betrayed himself by speaking English too fluently, and he instantly fell back into his former mode of expression; Porpoise had either not remarked his slip of the tongue, or thought it best not to comment on it.

"I go send letter aboard," he continued, stepping back a pace as if to be ready to spring into his boat. His crew in the mean time had begun to vociferate something I could not understand. He replied to them in the same language, and I have no doubt it was to tell them that their enterprise was fruitless, and that it was not quite so easy to catch the crew of an English yacht napping as they might have supposed. He still hesitated to take his departure. Some plan or other was passing through his fertile, ever-active brain. Perhaps he did not suspect that I had recognized him. However, whatever might have been his intentions, he was summoned hurriedly into the boat by his crew. He turned hastily round and cast his eye to the northward, so did I and Porpoise. There,

rising out of the water as it were, was a small white cloud, which, as we looked, every instant increased in size.

"You'd better shorten sail, or you'll repent it," exclaimed the seeming Greek, as he leaped into his boat.

The crew pulled lustily away in the direction of their own vessel. Nothing comes on so rapidly and gives so little time for preparation as does a white squall in the Mediterranean. Porpoise, taking the advice offered, gave the necessary orders. All hands rushed to the halliards and downhalls, but before a rope could be let go the squall was upon us. A drift of white foam came rushing towards the cutter, driven on by some irresistible power, which at the same time curled up the whole hitherto calm and shining sea into rolling, breaking waves. Our eyes were almost blinded with the salt mist which dashed over us. Terrific was the blow we received. The cutter having no steerage way offered a dead resistance to it. Over she went as does a stately tree, its stem cut through by the woodman's deadly axe and saw.

"Hold on! hold on for your lives!" sung out Porpoise.

There was good reason, I thought she would never rise again. The water rose up her decks. We began to look at boats and spars as the only hope of safety.

Then shrouds, and stays, and bolts gave way, and the stout mast cracked off at the deck with a loud crash; and the little craft rising on an even keel floated in safety, but presented a forlorn wreck compared to the gay and gallant trim in which she had lately appeared. Not a moment was to be lost in ascertaining whether the cutter had received any vital damage, and in endeavouring to put her to rights. Everybody was busily engaged in the work. Hearty and our landsmen friends took the matter very coolly.

"Just sing out where you want us to lend a hand, and we are four men," cried Hearty, pulling and hauling away with a will, while we were getting in the wreck of our mast and spars.

The drag of the rigging astern brought the vessel up into the wind's eye, and then she lay pitching and bobbing away into the short seas, sending the spray flying over us like a regular shower-bath, and surrounding us with a mist impervious to the sight. It was heavy work, and as part of the bulwarks had been knocked away there was no little danger of being washed overboard. Where, however, all labour with a will, the hardest task is soon performed; and no fellows could have worked harder than did our crew of yachtsmen. Before, however, the craft was in any way put to rights, the squall and its effects on the sea had

completely passed away, but night coming down had shrouded us in total darkness. No one had thought of the Greek brig or her boat, and now not a glimpse of either was to be perceived.

What had become of her? Had the boat with the rascal Sandgate been swamped? Had the brig been caught by the squall and gone down? Such had been the fate of many a craft in the Mediterranean. When we had got the yacht somewhat to rights we made inquiries among the men, but no one had observed her. Old Sleet, it was said, had watched the boat pulling away for her even during the hurly-burly of the squall. I therefore called him up to examine him more particularly.

"When we was on our beam-ends, and I thought we was over for good, still I couldn't help keeping my eye on the boat," said the old man; "I can't say as how I liked the look of that ere curious chap the Greek captain who came aboard us, and as for his crew, a bigger set of cut-throats I never saw. Well, thinks I to myself, if the boat goes to the bottom, and all her people goes in her, there's no great harm done; but if she floats and gains the brig, they may just come back when we are not prepared for them, and try to knock us all on the head; but, says I to myself, there's no use talking about it, for the gentlemen won't believe

such a thing possible, and I shall only get laughed at for my pains."

I was very much inclined to agree with the old man, that if our Greek friend had escaped drowning, and could discover our whereabout, he would be apt to try his hand at playing us some scurvy trick; but I said nothing to this effect. I however resolved to speak to Porpoise, so that we might be prepared to resist any attack he might attempt to make on us. Porpoise was rather inclined to laugh at my fears.

"My belief is that the fellow went to the bottom," he replied. "Serve him right, too, if he is the rascal you suppose him; or if he got aboard his ship he saw enough of us to know that we should prove rather a tough morsel, should he attempt to swallow us,"

A council of war having been called, it was resolved that we should try to get back to Gibraltar as fast as we could. To effect this, however, it would be necessary to rig jury-masts, and this could not very well be done till daylight. We proposed turning the cutter into a schooner or lugger, and happily, as we had saved most of our spars and canvas, we expected to have no great difficulty in getting sufficient sail on her to navigate with ease the poor little closely-shorn craft.

I have often had in my naval career to pass through

nights of toil and anxiety, and this gave every promise of being one of that character. In a few hours we had gathered in all our ruffled feathers, or, in other words, our masts, and spars, and sails, and rigging; and having stowed them along the decks as best we could, there we lay floating helplessly like a log on the water. Not having discarded my suspicions of the polacre brig, notwithstanding my fatigue I felt no inclination to go to sleep. I now was left in charge of the deck while Porpoise and the rest of my messmates turned in, all standing. I walked the deck for some time, ever and anon turning my gaze upward to the dark blue vault of heaven glittering with a thousand stars, each but a centre of some mighty system, each more complex and marvellous, probably, than our own. I thought of the all-potent Being who made them as well as all the wondrous specimens of animal life which dwell on this globe we call our own, and my heart swelled with gratitude to Him who had preserved me and my shipmates from the danger to which we had been exposed. My spirit, as I thought, seemed to take its flight through the calm atmosphere, and to wander far far away among those distant spheres. How long it was away I know not. I was not conscious of the existence of my body on the surface of the globe. A splash aroused me from my reveries. It was caused by a fish leaping

out of its liquid home to avoid some monster of the deep wishing to make a supper off it. It called me back to earth and things earthly. My first impulse was to cast my eye round the horizon. It was rather a circumscribed one at that hour of darkness. Once I made the full circuit and could see nothing. I took a few more turns on deck, and again I swept my eye round the watery circle more slowly than before. As I reached the south-eastern point of the heavens I was certain I saw a dark object. I rubbed my eyes. The sails of a vessel appeared before me rising up like a thin dark pencil-line against the sky. I wetted my fingers and held up my hand. The cold struck it on that side. Whatever she might be she was well to windward of us. I took the night-glass, which hung on brackets just inside the companion-hatch. She was still too far off to enable me to make out what she was. I had not, however, forgotten my suspicions of the polacre. The stranger was evidently approaching us. If she was the Greek, her crew would scarcely resist the temptation of attempting to plunder us. Still I felt that my suspicions were almost absurd, and I did not like to arouse my friends without some better grounds for my fears. I however felt it would be wise not to run the risk of being taken altogether unprepared. I therefore went up alongside old Snow—so

we called him, though he was young enough to be old Sleet's son. I was not long in waking him up to the proper pitch of caution by narrating a variety of stories about pirates, and slavers, and savages, and such like gentry, with a due admixture of instances where people from carelessness were caught napping and lost their lives.

"Now," said I, "let us get these spars cleared away enough to work the guns. The watch on deck will do it without rousing the rest. We'll have a supply up of round shot and ammunition. The people have not restored their pistols and cutlasses to the arm-chest. Send a couple of hands to collect them all ready, and then if yonder stranger proves to be the polacre, and wishes to taste our quality, we'll let her have her will, and show her what we are made of."

I spoke thus confidently that there might be no risk of taking any of the pluck out of the people. I cannot say, however, that I at all liked the notion of a brush with the well-manned, and, probably, well-armed polacre brig in our present dismantled condition, however little I might have feared her at close quarters had we been all to rights. I watched the approach of the stranger, therefore, with no little anxiety. She was evidently bearing right down upon us, though, as there was but little wind, her progress

was slow. The hours of the night wore on. I was leaning against the wreck of the mast which lay fore and aft along the deck, and at length I fell asleep. I do not know how long I had slept when I heard Porpoise's voice close to me.

"Hillo, Brine! what in the name of wonder is that away there to windward?" he exclaimed.

"The polacre brig, there's no doubt about it," I answered, as I beheld a vessel like a dark phantom stealing up towards us. I then explained to him the preparations I had made in case the brig should really be of the piratical character we suspected, and at the same time inclined to attack us. This relieved his mind not a little. My belief, however, was that the Greek might not have seen us. She might, of course, have calculated our whereabouts. Perhaps even now she might not see us. Perhaps, also, as Porpoise suggested, if the boat was swamped in the squall, the rest of the crew would probably cruise about to look for their companions. He agreed with me, therefore, that we need not yet rouse up Hearty and our other two friends. By-the-by, in consequence of all the delays we must endure, I was doubly glad that we had not told Hearty of Miss Mizen's expedition to Malta. It would have made him undergo them with much less than his usual philosophy, I suspect.

"I doubt if even now the brig sees us," said I, as I watched her through the night-glass. So low down in the water as we were, she was very likely to miss us.

"See, she is passing us," exclaimed Porpoise, after we had watched her for some time. "It is just as well she should miss us, for in our present state we could not exactly do ourselves justice."

"Perhaps, after all, our friend may be very well disposed, and in no way inclined to do us any harm," said I, not that I could in reality divest myself of the idea that the polacre was commanded by Sandgate, and that he would have delighted to do us all the mischief in his power. With daylight, however, I don't think I should fear him, even now, I thought to myself.

It still wanted nearly an hour to sunrise, and daylight in that clime does not come very long before the glorious luminary of day rushes up from his ocean bed. We hoped by that time that the brig would have pretty well run us out of sight. Still neither Porpoise nor I felt inclined to go below again. We intended, indeed, to rouse out all hands to get up the jury-masts the moment we had light to work by. We, however, were not so clear of danger as we fancied. The brig had got about a mile to leeward of us when we saw her brace up her yards, and, close hauled, she

stood back so as soon to fetch us. There was no longer any time to spare.

"Rouse up all hands fore and aft," sung out Porpoise, with a stentorian voice.

In a minute every one was on deck busily employed in casting loose the guns, in priming pistols, and buckling on cutlasses.

"If the fellow will but come to close quarters, we have no reason to fear him," exclaimed our gallant skipper, surveying his crew with no little pride.

"I only wish we may have a brush with him," added Hearty; "it would tell well in the Club; only I wish we had our mast standing." I cannot say that I participated altogether in the satisfaction of my friends. The brig, if she did attack us, I knew, we must find an ugly customer, and the pirates could only venture to do so with the full intention of sending every one of us, with the yacht into the bargain, to the bottom, on the principle that dead men tell no tales.

The Greek was not long in showing us his intentions. No sooner had he got us within range of his guns, than brailing up his courses and lowering his topsails, he opened his fire upon our almost helpless craft. Happily for us his gunnery was very bad, and he evidently had a fancy for long bowls, and a wholesome dread of coming to close quarters with us. Our people went

cheerily to their guns, not a bit afraid of our big enemy.

"Only just do ye come on, ye confounded scoundrels, and we'll just give ye a taste of what we are made of," sung out Tom Hail, a broad-shouldered fellow standing six feet high or more in his stockings, as he shook his cutlass in an attitude of defiance at the enemy; and no one was better able to give an account of them than he would have been when the day's work was over.

Will Bubble threw off his coat, fastened a silk handkerchief round his waist, and another round his head, and worked away at his little gun in fine style. Carstairs did the same in a more deliberate manner, whistling the fag end of a hunting song. If we had possessed guns four times the size of ours, I verily believe, crippled as we were, we should very soon have sent our antagonists to the bottom, instead of running the risk of going there ourselves. Finding his shot fall short or wide of us, he ran on a little way, and then tacking, stood closer up to us.

CHAPTER III.

THE ENGAGEMENT. — OUR DESPERATE CONDITION. — A FRIEND IN SIGHT.—OUR ENEMY FLIES.—MALTA.

By this time the first faint streaks of early dawn had appeared in the sky; but in that latitude the sun does not take long to get above the horizon, and daylight was on us almost as soon as the brig had again got us within range of her guns. Two or three shot struck our hull, and at the same time the enemy opened a fire of musketry on us; but the pirates did not prove themselves better marksmen with their small arms than they had hitherto done with their heavier guns.

"Oh, I wish the rascals would but attempt to run us aboard!" exclaimed Hearty. "To think of their impudence in daring to knock holes in the side of my yacht!"

"There spoke a true Briton," observed Bubble, as he once more ran out his gun. "He does not think anything at being shot at, but the idea of having his property injured, or his home invaded, rouses all his

anger. Here goes though; I'll see if we can't pay them off in their own coin, with some change in our favour."

Will was a capital marksman, and as cool as a cucumber, which was more than most of our men were, though not one was wanting in pluck. He pulled the trigger, and as I watched to see the effects of his fire, I saw two men fall on the pirate's deck, while some white splinters flying from the main-mast showed us that the shot had, as well, done some damage to the vessel herself.

"Hurra! bravo Bubble!" I shouted, and the crew echoed my cry, which, rising in full chorus, must have reached the ears of our enemy, and showed them that we were not likely to prove as easy a prey as they might have fancied. "Another such a shot as that and I believe they will up helm and be off," I exclaimed.

"I'll do my best," answered Bubble, fanning himself with his broad-brimmed hat, for the weather was very hot, and he had been making, for him, somewhat unusual exertions.

Will now trained his gun with great care: a great deal depended on a fortunate shot. "If we could but bring down one of his masts, or make a hole through his sides, we should win the day even now," he exclaimed, kneeling down to aim with more delibera-

tion; "a ten pound note to the man who wounds a mast or sends a shot between wind and water." As he afterwards acknowledged, the ten pounds was truly a widow's mite with him, for he hadn't another such sum in his locker to back it.

"I'll make it twenty," cried Hearty, who really seemed to enjoy the excitement of the adventure; "come, let us see who will win it."

"I have," cried Bubble, jumping up and clapping his hands like a schoolboy, as he watched with intense eagerness his shot strike the hull of the brig just at the water-line, sending the white splinters flying in every direction.

"Fairly won, Bubble, fairly won!" we all exclaimed; "if they don't plug that hole pretty quickly, they will soon find their jackets wetter than they like."

In return for the mischief we had done him, the pirate let fly his whole broadside at us. He was every instant drawing nearer and nearer, either to give his guns more effect, or to attempt carrying us by boarding. He probably fancied that we were by this time weakened by loss of men, as he very likely was not aware of the little effect produced by his own guns. Dismasted as we were, and low in the water, we presented, indeed, a somewhat difficult mark to hit. The pirate's approach gave us another advantage, as we

were now able to bring our own musketry into play, which somewhat made up for the lightness of our guns. We had a great advantage, also, in the rapid way we were able to load our guns, which were of brass, while our opponents' were probably of iron. Our muskets, too, were kept constantly at work; Ruggles, the steward, and Pepper, the boy, being set to load them as fast as they were discharged, while Carstairs had a first-rate rifle, with which he picked off every fellow whose red cap appeared above the bulwarks with as much *sang froid* as he would have knocked over a partridge on the 1st of September.

As our yachtsmen had had no practice with their guns, they were not particularly good shots, so that none of them surpassed Bubble in the accuracy of their aim, greatly to his delight. The enemy's shot now began to fall rather thicker around us, while two or three of our people were hit with their musket-balls. None of them were hurt sufficiently to make them leave the deck; we could not, however, expect that this state of impunity would long continue. I every now and then turned an eye on Bubble to watch his energetic proceedings, though I had enough to do to load and fire away with my own musket. On a sudden as he jumped up to watch the effect of his shot, I saw him stagger back and fall on the deck; I sprang

forward to raise him up, "Oh, it's nothing, nothing," he exclaimed, turning, however, at the same time very pale; "only the wind of a shot or little more, but it's a new sensation, took me by surprise; just set me on my legs again and I shall be all to rights soon." This, however, was more than I could do, poor fellow. He had been hit, and badly, too, I was afraid; I sent Ruggles down for a glass of brandy and water. "Just bring up a flask, and a jug of water also," said I, "others may want it." Bubble was much revived by the draught, and binding a handkerchief over his side, which was really wounded, though not so badly as I feared, with the greatest pluck he again went to his gun.

During this interval the enemy had ceased firing, having shot some way ahead of us, but he now again tacked, and, looking well up to windward, stood towards us on a line which would enable him to run us aboard, if he pleased, or to strike us so directly amidships, that there was every probability of his sinking us. This last proceeding was the one most to be feared, and I felt sure that he would not scruple so to do. I could not tell if my friends saw the terrific danger we were in; I thought not, for they went on peppering away with their fire-arms, and laughing and cheering, as if the whole affair was a very good joke. I confess that my heart sank within me as I contemplated the fate which

awaited us. "How soon will those gay and gallant spirits be quenched in death," I thought. "How completely will our remorseless enemies triumph. They have all this time been merely playing with us as a cat does with a mouse." Five minutes more would, I calculated, consummate the catastrophe. A minute had, however, scarcely passed, when I saw the brig square away her yards; and putting up her helm, off she went before the wind. Her courses were let fall; topgallant-sails were set, studding-sails and royals soon followed. Every stitch of canvas she could carry was got on her, while not the slightest further attention did she pay to us. I rubbed my eyes, for I could scarcely believe my senses. We, however, continued firing away at her as long as there was the chance of a shot reaching her, and then our men set up such a jovial hearty cheer, which if it could have reached the ears of the pirates, would have convinced them that we had still an abundance of fight left in us.

What had caused the enemy so suddenly to haul off was now the wonder. At all events I trust that we were thankful for our unexpected deliverance. When I pointed out to my companions the danger we had been in, they at once saw it themselves. Porpoise had seen it indeed all along, but had concealed his apprehension as I had done mine.

"The rascal found we were too tough a morsel to swallow, so thought he had better let us alone at once," said Hearty.

"I cannot think that," I observed; "he had some other reason, depend on it." I was right; the mystery was soon solved. All hands at once set to work to fit and rig the jury-masts, when we were called from our occupation by a cheer from Bubble, whose wound made it clearly dangerous for him to exert himself in any way.

"A sail, a sail!" he exclaimed; "a big ship, too, I suspect."

I looked in the direction in which he pointed away to windward, where the topsails of a ship appeared rising above the horizon; from their squareness I judged her to be a man-of-war. The rising sun just tinged the weather-side of her canvas, as she bore down on us with a streak of light which made her stand out in bold relief against the deep blue sky. The pirate crew had of course seen her from aloft long before we could have done so. She was welcome in every way, as she would probably enable us to get into port. The only provoking part of the business was, that the pirate would in all probability get away with impunity. Had she but come on the scene an hour earlier, she would, probably, have been down upon us

before either we or the pirate could have seen her, and would most assuredly have nabbed our amigo.

"Never mind," said Porpoise, "the fellow can scarcely get out of the Straits even if he wishes it, and if I ever fall in with him within the boundaries of the Mediterranean, I have no fear of not knowing him again; we shall hear more of him by-and-by depend on it."

Our fighting had given us an appetite, so we went to breakfast with no little satisfaction, though we had not much time to spare for it. Bubble would not acknowledge that his wound was of consequence, though he let me look to it, as I did to the hurts of the other poor fellows who were hit. From the appearance they presented, I was truly glad that there was a good prospect of their having surgical aid without delay. They did not know, as I did, that their wounds would be far more painful in a few hours than they were at that time, so they made very light of them. As the stranger drew nearer, we made her out to be a sloop-of-war, and the ensign flying from her peak showed her to be British; she had been standing so as to pass a little way to the westward of us. When, however, she made us out, which she did not do till she was quite close to us, she altered her course and was soon hove-to, a few cables' length to leeward. A

boat was lowered, and, with an officer in the stern-sheets, came pulling towards us.

"What in the name of wonder is the matter?" exclaimed the officer, standing up and surveying us with no little surprise.

"Why, Sprat, the matter is that we have been dismasted in a white squall, which would have sent many a craft to the bottom," answered Porpoise, who in the officer recognised an old shipmate; "we since then have been made a target of by a rascally pirate, whose mast heads have scarcely yet sunk beneath the horizon."

"If that is the case, we must see if we cannot catch her," answered Lieutenant Sprat, who was second-lieutenant of the corvette.

"What, sir! leave us rolling helplessly about here like an empty tub?" exclaimed Hearty, in a dolorous tone. "But never mind, if you think you can catch her, I dare say we can take care of ourselves."

"I'll report the state of things to Captain Arden, and learn what he wishes," quoth Lieutenant Sprat, as he pulled back to his ship.

In another minute the corvette's jolly-boat was seen leaving her side, while she, putting up her helm, stood away in the direction the pirate had taken. The jolly-boat soon came alongside with a midshipman and six men.

"Captain Arden has sent me with the carpenter's mate and some of his crew to help you in," quoth Master Middie, addressing Porpoise; "we'll soon get a new mast into you and carry you safely to old Gib, or wherever you want to go."

Porpoise looked at him, and evidently felt very much inclined to laugh. He was one of the shortest lads in a midshipman's uniform I ever saw, but he was broad-shouldered, and had a countenance which showed clearly that he very well knew what he was about.

"Thank you," answered Porpoise; "we shall be much beholden to you I doubt not, though we should have been glad if your captain had sent us a doctor as well. May I ask your name, young gentleman?"

"Mite, sir; Anthony Mite," answered the midshipman, a little taken aback at Porpoise's manner.

The old lieutenant did not quite like his patronizing airs.

"I thought so," observed our worthy skipper; "your father was a shipmate of mine, youngster, and you are very like him."

"In knowing my father you knew a brave man, I hope, sir, you will allow," replied Master Mite, with much spirit.

"But I did not know that you were in the service.

A better or braver fellow never stepped," answered Porpoise, warmly, putting out his hand. "I've no doubt you are worthy of him, youngster. We'll have a yarn about him by-and-by. However, just now, we must try to get the craft in sailing trim again."

Small as the young midshipman was in stature, he soon made it evident that he was of the true stuff which forms a hero. He was here, there, and everywhere, pulling and hauling, directing and encouraging. So rapid were his movements, that his body seemed ubiquitous, while the tone of his voice showed that he was well accustomed to command and to be obeyed. We had no reason to complain of either the officer or labourers Captain Arden had sent us. Meantime, I had been keeping my eye on the proceedings of the corvette. She at first stood away steadily to the northward and eastward, in the direction the brig had taken, and it seemed evident, that she had her in sight; then she altered her course to the westward, but finally disappeared below the horizon, steering nearly due north.

"If the man-of-war has still the brig in sight, the latter must be making for some Spanish port, where the pirates hope to lie concealed till the search for them is over," I thought to myself. "However, Sandgate, if he really is the commander, is up to all

sorts of dodges, and will very like, some how or other, manage to make his escape.".

As may be supposed, we watched very anxiously for the re-appearance of the corvette, but the sun went down and we saw nothing of her. However, we had by this time got up apologies for three masts, and, moreover, managed to make sail on them.

It was a great satisfaction to feel the poor little barkie once more slipping through the water, though at a much slower pace than usual.

As I feared, both Bubble and the men who had been wounded began, towards midnight, to complain somewhat of their hurts. While we were all sitting round the table in the cabin at supper, before turning in, Hearty, as Porpoise had done, expressed his regret that Captain Arden had not sent us a surgeon.

"Oh, we didn't know that any one was hurt," observed Mr. Mite. "But never mind, I understand something of doctoring. I can bleed in first-rate style, I can tell you. Don't you think I had better try my hand?"

"Thank you, they have been bled enough already, I suspect," answered Hearty. "I'm afraid no one on board can do much good to them. I only pray the wind may hold, and that we may soon get into Gibraltar."

But Master Mite was not so easily turned aside from his purpose of trying his hand as a surgeon. He begged hard that he might, at all events, be allowed to examine the men's wounds.

We of course assured our young friend, that we did not doubt his surgical talents, but still declined allowing him to operate on any of the yacht's crew. We were not sorry, however, to let him take the middle watch, which he volunteered to do, for both Porpoise and I and old Snow were regularly worn out. The wind held fair, and there was not much of it. The night passed away quietly, and when morning broke we saw the corvette standing after us. She had been, as I expected, unsuccessful in her chase of the Greek brig. She had made sail after a craft, which she took for her, but on coming up with the chase, discovered her to be an honest trader laden with corn. She now took us in tow, and in the afternoon we reached the Rock.

Hearty very soon heard that the 'Zebra' had gone on to Malta, with Miss Mizen on board, and from the way he received the information, I suspected that his feelings towards her were of a warmer character than I at first supposed. He was very anxious to be away again, and urged on Porpoise to do his utmost to expedite the refitting of the yacht. Fortunately, we were able

to procure a spar intended for the mast of a man-of-war schooner, and which was not refused to the application of an M.P. In a week the little craft was all to rights again, and once more on her way to that little military hot-house—the far famed island of Malta.

CHAPTER IV.

VALETTA.—A GLIMPSE OF THE PIRATE.

MALTA lay basking on the bright blue ocean, looking very white and very hot under the scorching rays of a burning sun, as, early in the forenoon, we stood towards the entrance of the harbour of Valetta. Passing St. Elmo Castle on our right, and Fort Ricasoli on our left, whose numberless guns looked frowning down upon us, as if ready, at a moment's notice, to annihilate any enemy daring to enter with an exhibition of hostile intent, we ran up that magnificent inlet called the Grand Harbour.

Malta harbour has been so often described, that my readers will not thank me for another elaborate drawing. Only, let them picture to themselves a gulf from three to four hundred yards across, with several deep inlets full of shipping, and on every conspicuous point, on all sides, white batteries of hewn stone, of various heights: some flush with the water, others rising in

tiers one above another, with huge black guns grinning out of them, the whole crowned with flat-roofed barracks, and palaces, and churches, and steeples, and towers, with a blue sky overhead, and blue water below, covered with oriental-looking boats, and lateen-rigged craft, with high pointed triangular sails of snowy whiteness, and boatmen in gaily coloured scarfs and caps, and men-of-war, and merchant vessels,—and a very tolerable idea will be formed of the place.

Valetta itself, the capital, stands on a hog's back, a narrow but high neck of land, dividing the Grand Harbour from the quarantine harbour, called, also, Marsa Muceit. The chief streets run in parallel lines along this said hog's back, and they are intersected by others, which run up and down its steep sides. In some parts they are so steep that flights of steps take the place of the carriage-way. The best known of these steps are the Nix Mangiari Stairs, so called from the troops of little beggars who infest them, and assure all passers by that they have had nothing to eat for six days. "*Oh, signori, me no fader no moder; me nix mangiari seis journi!*" An assertion which their fat cheeks and obese little figures most undeniably contradict. Few people will forget those steep steps who have had to toil to the top of them on a sweltering day, not one, but three or four times, perchance; nor will

those noisy, lazy, dirty beggars—those sights most foul—those odours most sickening—fade from his memory.

We ran up the harbour and dropped our anchor not far from the chief landing-place, abreast of Nix Mangiari Steps. There were several men-of-war in the harbour. Among them was our old friend the 'Trident.'

"If Piper sees us, we shall soon have him on board, to tell us all the news," observed Porpoise. "I don't think Master Mite will forget us, either, if he can manage to come. Our good things, in the way of eating and drinking, made no slight impression on his mind, whatever he may have thought of us as individuals. If he has an opportunity that little fellow will distinguish himself."

While stowing sails, the rest of the party having gone below to prepare for a visit to the shore, my eye, as it ranged round the harbour, fell on the sails of a Greek brig, which was just then standing out of the galley port. I looked at her attentively, and then pointed her out to Snow, who was so earnest in seeing that his mainsail was stowed in the smoothest of skins, that he had not observed her.

"What do you think of her?" said I.

"Why, sir, if she isn't that rascally craft which

attacked us, she is as like her as one marlinspike is to another!" he exclaimed, slapping his hand on his thigh. "I'll be hanged but what I believe it is her, and no mistake about it."

"I think so too. Call Mr. Porpoise," said I.

Porpoise jumped on deck with his coat off, and a hair-brush in each hand, to look at her.

"I couldn't swear to her; but she is the same build and look of craft as our piratical friend," he answered. "Hang it! I wish that we had come in an hour or two sooner; we might have just nabbed her. As it is, I fear, before we can have time to get the power from the proper authorities to stop her, she will be far away, and laughing at us. At all events, there is not a moment to be lost."

By this time all hands were on deck, looking at the Greek brig; but all were not agreed as to her being the pirate. However, the gig was lowered, and we pulled on shore, to hurry up as fast as we could to the governor's palace, to make our report, and to get him to stop the brig before she got out of the harbour.

Landing among empty casks and bales on the sandy shore, we hurried up Nix Mangiari Stairs, greatly to the detriment of Porpoise's conversational powers, and then on to the residence of the governor, once the palace of the Grand Master of the far-famed Knights

of Malta; a huge square structure, imposing for its size, rather than for the beauty of its architecture. The governor was within, and without delay we were ushered through a magnificent suite of rooms into his presence. He received us politely; but raised his eyebrows at the account of our adventure with the pirate, and seemed to insinuate that yachting gentlemen might be apt to be mistaken, and that we had perhaps after all only found a mare's-nest.

"But, hang it, sir," exclaimed Hearty, "the villain fired into us as fast as he could; and that gentleman, Mr. Bubble, and several of my people, were hit. There was no fancy in that, I imagine."

"Ah, I see; that alters the case," said the governor. "We will send and stop the brig; but, understand, that you will have to prove that she is the vessel which fired into you; and, if she is not, you must be answerable for the consequences."

"By all manner of means," sung out Hearty. "I suppose the consequences won't be very dreadful."

"Hang the consequences," he exclaimed, as soon afterwards we were left to ourselves, to await the report from the telegraph station. "I cannot bear to hear these official gentlemen babbling of consequences, when rogues are to be punished, and honest men protected. A thing must be either right or wrong. If

it's right, do it—if it's wrong, let it alone. I hate the red-tape system which binds our rulers from beginning to end. We must break through it; and that pretty quickly, or Old England will come to an end."

We were all ready enough to argue with Hearty in this matter, though the said breaking through an old, deep-rooted system is more easy to propose than to carry into effect.

After we had waited some time, word was brought to the palace that, as I expected would be the case, the suspicious brig had got out of the harbour; and was out of the range of the guns on the batteries before the message had reached them. A gun was fired to bring her to, but of course she paid no attention to the signal. Once more we were ushered into the presence of the governor. He was very civil and very kind, be it understood.

"Your best course is to go to the admiral, and tell him your story, and perhaps he will send a man-of-war after her."

"Thank you, sir," said Hearty, rising. "We will do as you advise; though I fear, before a man-of-war can get under weigh, our piratical friend will be safe from pursuit."

"It matters little. He is very certain to be caught before long; and we will have him hung at his own

yard-arm, like some of his predecessors," observed the governor, politely bowing us out.

"Humph!" muttered Hearty, as we descended the superb steps of the palatial abode. "It matters not, I suppose, how many throats may be cut, and how many rich cargoes sent to the bottom in the mean time. Hang official routine, I say again. We must get these things altered in Parliament."*

The admiral was living on shore, and to his residence we repaired as fast as our legs would carry us, with the thermometer at 90°.

"I wish that we had taken the law into our own hands, and made chase after the fellow in the yacht," exclaimed poor Porpoise, wiping the perspiration from his forehead. "A few hours' fighting would have been better than this hot work."

"All very well if we could prove that she was the vessel which attacked us; but if it should have turned out that we were mistaken, we should have been in the place of the pirates, and have been accused of murder, robbery, rapine, and all sorts of atrocities," remarked Bubble. "No, no; depend on it things

* Let no one suppose that this incident is intended to reflect on any particular governor of Malta. It is, unhappily, only too characteristic of many of our governors, ambassadors, and consuls; and other authorities in various parts of the world, both at home and abroad. Certainly, old Tom, well known to fame, would not have so acted.

are better as they are. Retribution will overtake the fellows one of these days."

The admiral's abode was reached at last; but the admiral was not at home, though his secretary was. The admiral had gone into the country, and would not return till the cool of the evening. The secretary received us very politely, though he seemed rather inclined to laugh at our suspicions.

A pirate sail into Malta Harbour—beard the lion in his den! The idea was too absurd. It was scarcely possible that any pirates could exist in the Mediterranean. A few had appeared, from time to time, it was true; but several had been hung, and the example had proved a warning to other evil doers. He would, however, as soon as the admiral returned, mention the circumstance to him, and if he thought fit he would undoubtedly send a vessel in chase of the suspected polacre.

Such was the substance of the worthy secretary's remarks to us. We could not go in search of the admiral, as it was uncertain where he was to be found, so, very little satisfied with our morning's work, we left the house.

"What shall we do next?" exclaimed Hearty. "There seems to be no chance of our catching Master Sandgate."

"Oh, by all means, let us go on board and get cool," answered Porpoise.

"Certainly," said Bubble, "I want to look out some zephyr clothing. One can bear nothing thicker than a cobweb this sultry weather."

So on board we went, and lay each man in his cabin with all the sky-lights off, and wind-sails down, an awning over the deck, and a pulkah invented by Bubble, kept working, which sent a stream of air through every portion of our abode, so that we were far more comfortable than we could have been anywhere else. When yachting I always make a point of going everywhere in the yacht, and living on board her, scarcely ever entering an hotel. We thus spent two or three hours—some reading, others smoking or talking, Bubble every now and then giving vent to his feelings in snatches of song. I am not certain that we did not all drop asleep. We were aroused from our quietness by the sound of footsteps on deck, and by the descent of the steward into the cabin.

"Please, sir, that young gentleman that came aboard from the sloop-of-war, after we lost our masts, wants to know if he may come below to see you," said he to Hearty.

"By all means," cried Hearty, springing up; "glad to see him."

Master Mite had followed the steward, and heard the last observation.

"Thank you, sir," quoth he, helping himself to a seat. "Glad to see you, too. Scarcely thought you would be here so soon. Just in time for a grand ball. You'll like it. We can take you there. I'm a great favourite with the signora. Told me to bring all my friends—the more the better—very hearty people for Smaitches. That's what we call the Maltese here, you know. I saw your craft come in, and wanted to come on board before, but couldn't. A midshipman is not always his own master, you know. At last I got leave from our jolly old first, Tom Piper. He told me to say that he would come as soon as he could. I know that he wants to press you to come to the ball, also."

Thus did the young midshipman run on. Hearty told him that he should be very happy to go to his friend's house under his chaperonage, and that so should we all, which mightily pleased Master Mite.

"That's right," he exclaimed. "It will be jolly good fun, I can tell you. There are some very nice English people, too, great friends of mine. Such a splendiferous girl, too—a Miss Mizen,—came out with her uncle, old Rullock, in the 'Zebra.' I dance with her whenever I can. If you could but see her I'm sure you'd say my taste was very good. Some people

think that she is cut out by another fine girl, a Miss Jane Seton; but I don't. Jane's all very well in her way, very fine to look at, and all that sort of thing; but to say the truth, she's rather addicted to snubbing midshipmen, and that we don't approve of. As for her mother, she wouldn't touch one of us with a boarding-pike. She's a terrible old harridan, and that's not in Jane's favour. Oh, no, give me Laura Mizen for my money, and all our mess say the same. She's the toast of the mess just now, I can tell you."

While the youngster was running on thus I watched Hearty's countenance. He fairly blushed, and looked more pleased, and astonished, and puzzled than I had ever seen him before in my life. He evidently did not like to stop the boy, though he winced at hearing Miss Mizen spoken of as the toast of the mess. He was astonished, and clearly delighted at hearing that she was so near him, for, as may be remembered, I had not told him that she and her mother had come out to Malta, nor did he hear of the circumstance during our stay at Gibraltar. Dinner was soon brought on the table, and Tom Mite did not fail to do ample justice to it.

"Well, you yacht's men do live like princes," quoth the young gentleman, as he quaffed his cool claret. "When I come into my fortune, I'll get a yacht, and

cut the service. Then, if Miss Mizen, or some other fine young girl like her, will have me, she shall become the rover's bride. Oh, wouldn't it be jolly! Here's to her health in the mean time."

I could stand the joke no longer, and burst into a fit of laughter.

"What's the matter?" asked Tommy, guessing he might have been saying something he had better not have said.

"Only that Captain Rullock and his sister and niece are great friends of ours, and that they will be highly flattered at the high estimation in which they are held by your mess," I answered.

Mite, who had plenty of tact, very adroitly replied, "Well, gentlemen, I hope that you will come to the ball, and meet your friends."

His invitation was backed by Lieutenant Piper, who soon afterwards came on board, and it was arranged that we should call alongside the 'Trident' for them, just before sunset.

CHAPTER V.

A BALL.—WHAT OCCURRED AT IT.—THE GREEK COUNT.—MRS. SKYSCRAPER.

We were conducted by our friends to a handsome palace in one of the principal streets of Valetta. The ball-room was full of naval and military officers in uniform, and ladies in dresses of every hue and gossamer texture. Many were fair and blooming, but the dark skins and flashing eyes of a southern clime predominated.

Hearty and I walked in together. He cast a glance eagerly round the room. Laura Mizen against the field, as Carstairs would say, thought I. How will she receive him, however, is the question? We men are too often apt to forget that point. He was not long in finding her; he walked up hastily, and put out his hand. She looked up, a gleam of pleased surprise lighted up her eyes, and a slight blush suffused her cheek, and then she put out her hand with the same

frankness he had offered his. All right I thought: that is just as people should meet; they will understand each other very soon. Miss Mizen had entirely overlooked me when meeting Hearty, which, however complimentary to him, might under some circumstances have hurt my feelings.

After allowing them to talk a little, I went forward, and was cordially received as his friend. I was surprised that Carstairs and Bubble had not found their way to that end of the room. On returning towards the door, after exchanging a few words with some old naval acquaintance, I caught sight of him bending over a lady who was leaning back in an arm-chair flirting with her fan. Her face was thus hidden from me, but on getting nearer I beheld no less a personage than Mrs. Skyscraper; at a little distance was Bubble, carrying on an animated conversation with Miss Jane Seton, greatly to the chagrin, as it appeared, of a magnificently dressed Albanian who stood near them. The stranger's face was turned away from me, so that I could not see the expression of his countenance; but the convulsive clutch which he ever and anon made at the handle of his jewel-hilted dagger showed the irritation of his feelings; and so strongly did this movement impress me with his evil intentions, that I kept my eye fixed on his weapon

to hold him back should he attempt to do any mischief. Just at that moment Mite came up to me.

"This is fun, isn't it?" quoth my young friend. "Now to my mind there's a fine woman, the one Mr. Carstairs is talking to, but by Jupiter Ammon she's cut out by that girl there Mr. Bubble has ranged up alongside. She's superb, isn't she? what a Juno like head! still, do you know that I don't think I should quite like to offend her. She looks as if she could twitch a fellow by the ear pretty sharply. Look there now, there's another girl, she's much more to my mind, though she has nothing of the stunner about her. The primrose style is what I like, or the violet, if that's more to your taste—quiet and neat. Now, that's what I should call that little fair girl there. I say, I must just try and have a dance with her; I ought to, for the skipper made me toe and heel it with a little smartish girl who was wonderfully heavy to haul about; and as she didn't understand a word I said, and as I couldn't make out a word she said, there was no great fun in it."

Thus the youngster ran on somewhat flippantly, perhaps, drawing off my attention from Bubble and the Greek. I was, however, conscious that the latter had turned his head and looked at me. Directly afterwards he walked off to another part of the room.

As I was neither lazy nor too old to dance, nor blind to the charms of beauty, I was soon after this engaged in moving about to the sound of music among the laughing throng. Among others the fair Jane honoured me with her hand. I found her anything but a lively companion; somewhat absent, and far from haughty as before. Had the avenging Nemesis of an unrequited passion punished her for her treatment of my friend Loring? It looked very like it; she answered my most brilliant sallies of wit by monosyllables, and smiled faintly, putting her bouquet to her nose—but I am certain the sweets therein conveyed no sensation to her olfactory nerves. What was the matter with her I could in no way make out. I was leading her to a seat, somewhat weary with my vain endeavours to arouse her, when we encountered Sir Lloyd Snowdon, one of the officers of the garrison, and evidently an admirer of hers.

"It's all arranged, Miss Seton; we have fixed to have the pic-nic to-morrow. Mrs. Seton has promised, and so has Mrs. Mizen and Mrs. Rowley and Mrs. Gray and her daughters, and that charming personage Mrs. Skyscraper only waits to be asked." I recollected the pic-nic we had had to Netley, when my friend Loring had apparently made such way into the good graces of the fair Jane, but she made

no sign to betray any recollection of the event. I was acquainted with Sir Lloyd, and he knew Hearty well, so he invited all our party to join the pic-nic on the morrow. Old Rullock of the 'Zebra' of course was asked, and so was Captain Arden of the 'Trident,' and requested to bring some of their officers, rather an unusual stretch of military politeness at Malta, where midshipmen and even lieutenants are held often in but slight estimation.

We were to visit the old capital of Citta Vecchia and the catacombs, and the grotto of St. Paul's, and then to go on to a sheltered bay on the sea-shore, where the operation of dining was to be performed. The whole plan was soon arranged, and everybody was pleased. I was talking to Mrs. Skyscraper when Sir Lloyd Snowdon came up to us.

"By-the-by," said he to the widow, "I quite forgot to ask your friend the Greek Count: can you, my dear madam, tell me where he is to be found? I would remedy my neglect."

"Indeed, I cannot," answered the lady with a toss of her head; "I saw Count Gerovolio, but I have not watched his proceedings."

"Oh, Mrs. Skyscraper—Mrs. Skyscraper!" thought I, "what were your eyes about when they wandered just now so often towards Miss Seton, and that finely

dressed Albanian? I had missed the fair Jane after supper and heard her mother inquiring for her. I had wandered out on a narrow terrace which ran under the windows of a long corridor, to enjoy the fresh air and the moonlight. As I passed under one of the windows I saw two figures standing in the recess. One I saw was Count Gerovolio, the other I felt sure was Miss Seton. I would not have willingly been an eavesdropper, but I could scarcely help hearing what was said. I was arrested, also, by finding that the speakers were conversing in English.

"Beautiful girl," exclaimed the Count, in a tone of deep devotion, "you have enslaved me completely. I sought you but for my amusement, and you have thrown your golden chains around me, so that I could not break from them if I would.

"Oh! who are you?" exclaimed Miss Seton, in an agitated tone. "You did not tell me you could speak English. Surely you are not an Englishman."

"Whatever I am, I am a Greek at heart and by adoption," answered the stranger, with a slight hesitation in his voice. "I was first led to the shores of that classic land to fight for the cause of her long-oppressed children. My sword raised me to my present position. Let that suffice you. And now, lovely girl, do not longer hold me in torturing suspense

You know how deeply, how earnestly, I love you. Your mother, you tell me, will not consent to our union. Fly with me at once. My beautiful vessel waits off the coast to receive us on board, and to convey us to a land of freedom and romance; and where, emancipated from the trammels of the cold, calculating world, we may enjoy that bliss reserved for so few on earth."

Miss Seton's answer I could not hear. I could scarcely believe that she could be influenced by such palpable sophistry. Still I know that there are moments when even the wisest among the daughters of Eve, thrown off their guard by the wiles of the Evil One, are ready to listen to his most barefaced falsehoods; if they trust to their own strength—their own wisdom—and seek not protection from the only source whence it can come. "Oh, you consummate scoundrel!" I muttered to myself, as I retreated to the doorway, whence I had come out. I had no longer a doubt as to the identity of the pretended Greek. I resolved to put the matter to the test. Entering the house, I walked briskly along the gallery, towards the window where I had seen the two speakers. Miss Seton was there—more like a statue than a living being—leaning against the wall, with her hands pressed to her forehead; but the pretended Greek was gone.

"Miss Seton," said I, going up to her; "tell me what has become of Mr. Sandgate."

"I know not of whom you speak," she answered. "I know no one of that name."

"The man in the Greek dress," I replied, calmly, for I felt that much depended on my tone and manner.

"What! do you know him?" she asked, in a faltering voice.

"I do," said I; "and, Miss Seton, I would save you from him. He is worthless. He lives with a halter around his neck, and he will some day find it hauled taut."

She stood perfectly silent for some time. I allowed her to remain so that she might regain her composure. She did this in a wonderfully short space of time. I suspected that her feelings were not very acute.

"You know my secret. I throw myself on your generosity, and I am sure that you will not betray me, Mr. Brine."

"Indeed, you may trust me, Miss Seton," I replied; "I shall rejoice at being the means of saving you from a very great danger. Let me entreat you, therefore, not to see that man again on any account. Keep close to your mother, and let nothing separate you from her. Another time I will tell you his history, and you will see that you have reason to be guarded."

"Oh, tell me now, tell me now!" she exclaimed. "I will follow your advice; but I would hear all about him, and then shut him out of my thoughts for ever."

I saw that she was right, so I told her briefly all I knew about Sandgate. She shuddered several times at the narrative. She was not particularly romantic, and fully alive to the advantages of a good position, thanks to her mother's instruction. Though she had seen no great objection to becoming a Greek countess, she had reason to be thankful at having escaped falling into the power of a villain of the stamp of Sandgate: "Now let me lead you to Mrs. Seton," I replied, offering my arm. She took it. Her's trembled as it pressed mine.

"Why, Jane, my dear, you look very ill; what is the matter?" exclaimed the old lady, starting up with a look of real alarm in her countenance. I believe she loved her daughter, and fancied she showed it by helping her to make what she called a good match.

"Oh, nothing, nothing—the heat, I believe," she answered, turning still paler. "I think that I had better leave the room."

Her mother thought so likewise. I found their carriage. They lived not far off; so, following on foot,

I watched them till they were safely within their own doors. On returning to the ball-room I heard Mrs. Skyscraper making anxious inquiries as to what had become of Count Gerovolio.

"Never mind, we shall see him to-morrow at the pic-nic. He promised to be there," she observed. I saw from the look Carstairs gave that the Count had better behave himself should he venture to make his appearance, which I did not think very likely.

CHAPTER VI.

OUR MALTA PIC-NIC.—THE CATACOMBS. — THE PIRATE IN SIGHT.—SANDGATE AGAIN ESCAPES US.—OUR EXPEDITION WITH THE MEN-OF-WAR.—RETURN FROM OUR FRUITLESS CRUISE.

My friends were not a little astonished when I told them, on getting on board the yacht, that Sandgate was in the island. The question was, how to catch him. We had no moral doubt whatever that he had come on board our vessel with the intention of plundering us, and that he had afterwards endeavoured to send us to the bottom by attacking us in the polacre brig; still, no one could swear to the fact. We were not certain that the brig which left the harbour that morning was the one which had engaged us—we could not prove that he belonged to her; scarcely, indeed, could we expect to induce the authorities to believe that the Greek count and Sandgate the smuggler were one and the same person.

"Take my advice," observed Carstairs; "don't

let us fash ourselves on the subject, but give the rogue a long rope, and he will soon hang himself."

We all agreed to the wisdom of this remark, and resolving to wait the course of events, turned in and went to sleep.

A large and merry party set off to the scene of the pic-nic, some in calèches, and others in carriages of higher pretensions, and vehicles of all sorts, and others on horseback. I will not stop to describe the scenery. Stone walls, and here and there an orange grove, form its chief characteristics. It is wonderful that there is any cultivation, considering that the greater portion of the soil has been brought from other lands. That which is produced on the island is formed from the crumbling away of the surface of the rock of which it is composed.

Our party met by agreement near the gates. Hearty, greatly to his satisfaction, managed to undertake the escort of Mrs. Mizen and her daughter; the widow fell to the lot of Carstairs, and I took charge of Mrs. and Miss Seton.

"Oh! but where is Count Gerovolio?" exclaimed Mrs. Skyscraper, as we were driving off. "I fully expected to have him of our party. Has anybody seen him? Miss Seton, do you know what has become of him?"

Poor Jane for a moment looked dreadfully disconcerted at hearing the name of the impostor, but she soon recovered her self-possession, and I did my best to rattle on, so as to draw off the attention of her mother and Mister Mite, who had been admitted as a fourth in the carriage. Mrs. Skyscraper looked about in vain for the Count; I thought that he would scarcely have the boldness to make his appearance. Our drive, as far as we four ill-matched beings were concerned, was anything but a pleasant one. Old Mrs. Seton was annoyed at not having Sir Lloyd Snowdon, or any other eligible gentleman to act the suitor to her daughter.

Poor Jane could not drive away her own bitter thoughts. Mite would infinitely rather have been in the company of one of his jolly little Maltese acquaintances, and I felt oppressed at being the keeper of a young lady's secret. At last we arrived at the spot where our lionizing was to commence—the old capital of the island, Citta Vecchia, and had to descend from our conveyances.

The structures would delight a connoisseur in mediæval antiquities, for a more ancient looking collection of tumble-down houses I never saw collected together. Here stand the first palace of the Grand Masters, and the Cathedral of Malta, celebrated for

the pertinacity with which its bells are rung. But the great sight we had all come to see was the catacombs. Guides and lights were procured, and the whole party descended to them. Incongruous, indeed, seemed the light dresses of the ladies, the glittering uniforms of the officers, and the merry laughter of the party with the solemn, silent gloom of this vast receptacle for the dead. These catacombs consist of long galleries or streets cut in the rock, extending a great distance, and intersecting each other at right angles about fifteen feet beneath the surface of the ground. The gloom, the chilly, confined atmosphere, the dark shadows, the mysterious passages and recesses, the undefined shapes which flitted before us, were ill calculated to dispel poor Miss Seton's melancholy. She walked on, however, silently by my side, avoiding rather than courting the attention of Sir Lloyd Snowdon, who at length joined us, and who, seeing this, devoted himself with much tact to her mother.

"If you have any intention, Sir Lloyd," thought I, "you'll win the day, notwithstanding the present appearance of matters."

We could hear behind us the jovial voice of Captain Rullock, and every now and then a laugh from Hearty, who seemed to be in high spirits.

"He feels that he does not stand ill in the good

graces of Miss Mizen, I suspect," thought I. "Most sincerely do I rejoice at it; for though not to be compared in point of beauty to the lovely girl by my side, she will make him a very far better wife. Her straightforward honesty, her modesty, her bright intelligence, her well-cultivated mind, her unvarying good-temper, her genuine wit, her loving disposition, are certain to secure her husband's affections and respect."

Little did the lady by my side dream of the comparison I was drawing, and yet I verily believe that she might have been not much inferior to Miss Mizen in all those womanly qualities, had they not been crushed or perverted by the false system of education which her mother had adopted. Such were the somewhat incongruous thoughts which passed through my mind in the catacombs of Citta Vecchia. I ought to have been duly oppressed with the gloom of the place, and to have thought of nothing but ghost-like forms flitting through the mysterious passages. I do not know what my companion was thinking about, but she sighed deeply and sadly. That sigh touched my heart with pity, and reminded me how little I had attempted to do to restore her mind to a state of composure.

We had, as I said, walked on somewhat ahead of the rest of the party, and old Rullock and Hearty had

just hailed us to return, when directly before us appeared the figure of a man who was evidently endeavouring to conceal himself in one of the nitches cut in the rock. It had, however, been blocked up, and he was thus frustrated in his intention. He wore a large cloak, such as the Italians call a *feriuoligio*, with which he was attempting to hide his head, but the light of the torch carried by our guide fell directly on him, and revealed the features of Miles Sandgate.

He must have guessed that he was known, for he advanced a step or two rapidly towards us, but then, whatever were his intentions, he must have changed them, for he retreated as hurriedly, and was lost to view amid the surrounding gloom. I knew that Miss Seton had discovered him by the way in which her arm trembled in mine, and most certainly she would have fallen had I not supported her.

"I fear, Miss Seton, that the atmosphere of this place oppresses you; we will get out of it as soon as possible," said I.

"Thank you, thank you," she answered, leaning heavily on my arm; "I long for a breath of fresh air; I shall be better then."

Sir Lloyd Snowdon was much concerned at finding that Miss Seton was unwell, and the whole party hurried to the mouth of the catacombs.

It was very provoking to have Sandgate almost within one's very grasp, and yet not to have the power of punishing him.

On reaching the open air Miss Seton at first nearly fainted. Restoratives of all sorts were recommended by her friends, but before any could be applied, she recovered, and endeavoured to laugh off any disagreeable inquiries as to the cause of her attack. The exertion necessary to do this still further aroused her, and she speedily became one of the most lively and animated of the party; I saw that she could now do very well without me, so I retired from her side. Sir Lloyd Snowdon took my place. He was enchanted, and abandoned himself to the happiness of the moment. She saw her advantage, and not unmindful of her wise mother's instructions, seemed resolved to make the most of it. Still I thought that I detected at times the signs of unnatural spirits, and forced laughter, and I would not have answered for the consequences had the so-called Count Gerovolio appeared in the midst of us with a hundred well armed followers, and summoned her to accompany him.

From the catacombs we drove to the Grotto of St. Paul, which is at no great distance. Whether the apostle to the Gentiles ever took shelter within it, matters but little; the monks of old decreed that

he did, and therefore a fine statue of white marble has been placed within it, and the faithful have been encouraged to offer their gifts at his shrine. The statue stands in the furthest from the entrance of three grottoes; one within the other. We looked at them very much in the way that people in general look at sights with very little real interest, but thinking it necessary to give utterance to certain set expressions of surprise or admiration. The most interesting sight was a portion of the cavern which resembles the nave of a church overgrown with verdure. It is surprising that vegetation should flourish in such a position.

When we had all satisfied our curiosity, we proceeded to a small sheltered bay, where the most important part of the day's entertainment was to be performed. There was no great beauty of scenery, but the blue sea, and the pure sky, and the fresh salt breeze, and the rugged rocks, made it pleasant to the sight and feelings; and as most of the party had very good appetites, and tolerably clear consciences, we were altogether very merry. Captain Rullock, Hearty, Bubble, and Mite did their best to make it so. Miss Mizen was naturally very happy, so was her mamma, for Hearty had that day very palpably declared his intentions. Sir Lloyd Snowdon was happy because he thought he had won the beauty of

the season; and Mrs. Seton, because she fancied that the great object of her life was on the point of being accomplished.

Several vessels had been for some time in sight, but we had been so much engaged in our own immediate occupation, that neither I nor any of the other naval men had paid them much attention.

The heavier portion of the feast had been concluded, and sparkling wines filled our glasses, and luscious grapes our plates. Bubble had been called on for a song, and Sir Lloyd Snowdon for a speech, when we were somewhat startled from our propriety by a loud exclamation from Porpoise:—

"Why, by the Lord Harry, there's that rascally polacre brig again!" he cried, pointing to a vessel which was standing under full sail in shore.

Our pocket-telescopes were in instant requisition. The vessel in question was a polacre brig, of the same size, and paint, and build, and appearance aloft as the one which had attacked us; but still it was impossible to be certain as to whether the vessel in sight was the pirate or not. Porpoise was the only person who was positive as to her being so. Hearty was inclined to side with him. Still, what was to be done? Captains Rullock and Arden were ready enough to go in chase of her, but their ships were on

the other side of the island, and by the time they could have got back to Valetta and obtained permission from the admiral, and been under weigh, the suspicious brig would have been far away again.

This discussion once more nearly upset poor Miss Seton; but she seemed relieved, and recovered somewhat of her vivacity when it was resolved not to take any notice of the stranger. I, of course, as she did, could not help connecting the brig in sight with the appearance of the pretended Count Gerovolio in the catacombs. He had, I suspected, been hiding there for some reason or other, till he could get on board his vessel.

After a little time the fun of the pic-nic went on as before. I, however, not being in love, nor having any lady to whom it was necessary to pay exclusive attention, kept my eyes about me, and every now and then swept the line of the coast with my telescope: while I also did not neglect to watch the movements of the brig. As she came clearly into the plane of my glass, I observed a dark cloth on her foretopgallant-sail, which I suddenly recollected to have remarked on the same sail of the brig from which Sandgate boarded us, as she lay becalmed before the squall came on. This to my mind was conclusive evidence; but my suspicions were further confirmed by seeing the

polacre brig lower her topgallant-sails, and bring her head up to the wind. When hove to, she lowered a boat, which well-manned, at once made for the shore. I said nothing, but narrowly watched the point for which she was steering. As she drew near I saw a figure climb a rocky point and wave to her. The dress and air of the person left no doubt on my mind that he was no other than the Greek count, or rather Miles Sandgate. It was, indeed, provoking to see the rascal escaping before our very sight. Had we taken upon ourselves to make chase after him, he would have got on board the boat before we could have reached him. Still I felt that I ought to point out the state of things to Rullock and Arden, and let them judge what should be done.

"Go in chase of the fellow, by all means," they exclaimed; "we must not be too sanguine as to catching our bird, or proving him a culprit if we do catch him, but still we'll try."

It was arranged, therefore, that while the ladies and military men, and non-combatants should take their time to return, we naval men should hurry back to Valetta, and take the necessary steps to go in chase of the pirate. Hearty looked at Miss Mizen and thought he should very much like to stay with her, but his manhood would not let him; so he, with

Bubble and Carstairs, settled to go away in the yacht. Mrs. Skyscraper made an effort to detain the latter, but her admirer was not a man to shirk work where any was to be done, so he set off with the rest of us. This time we were more successful in finding the admiral. He was eager as we could be to catch the pirate, and instantly ordered the 'Trident' and 'Zebra' to go in chase of her. When last seen, after Sandgate, or the man we supposed to be him, had got on board, she was standing to the southward and east, with the wind from the northward; in which direction she would ultimately shape her course it was impossible to say. Calculating that she might probably be still hovering about the island, the 'Trident' was ordered, after leaving the harbour, to beat round to the northward of Malta; while the 'Zebra' was to keep to the southward, so as to intercept her, should she steer a course for the straits. It was arranged that the 'Frolic' should accompany the 'Zebra,' but to keep to the nor'ward of her, within telegraph distance.

"This is exciting," exclaimed Bubble, as we bowled along, in company with the brig-of-war, away from Malta harbour. "It seems like real work, going in chase of a pirate; only I hope that he may not give us the go-by in the dark."

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The sun sank into the ocean before we had rounded Gozo, so that we were not able to see what vessels were to the eastward of us. We kept, however, a very bright look-out on either hand, so that we thought no vessel could pass between us and the land on one side, or us and the 'Zebra' on the other. We were to stand on till we fell in with the 'Trident' at daylight, and then the three vessels, spreading wide apart, were to continue the chase all day, and return or not at discretion.

It was at first a lovely night, starlight and bright, with just such a breeze that we could carry our gaff-topsail, and yet the cutter scarcely heeled over to it.

None of us felt inclined to go below, notwithstanding the fatigues of the day and the previous night. Hearty, of course, had pleasant thoughts; Porpoise was eagerly watching for the pirate; I was running over the events of the day, and Bubble was whistling, while Carstairs was, I suspect, pondering on the advisability of proposing to Mrs. Skyscraper.

At first we had been very loquacious, but the silent solemnity of the night had an influence on all of us, and by degrees our remarks grew less and less frequent, till we were found standing, in meditative mood, in different parts of the vessel. The hours of the night passed by, and still we all kept the deck far

later than was our usual custom. Towards midnight, either from a mist rising, or from some other cause, the darkness very much increased.

"If this continues we shall have to shorten sail, or we shall be running into some craft or other," observed Porpoise, who was no great admirer of romance, and would rather all the time have been listening to a jovial song.

"Yes, indeed," said I; "very little chance, though, of falling in with our roving friend, even should he be in the neighbourhood."

"We'll get the gaff-topsail off her, Mr. Snow," said Porpoise; "the brig will be shortening sail, and if we do not, we shall be running ahead of her."

The order was given, and the hands had gone aloft to execute it, when an exclamation from the look-out forward made us open our eyes.

"A sail ahead, on the starboard bow," he shouted, with startling energy.

We looked in the direction indicated.

"Luff—luff all you can," cried Porpoise, with equal animation. "Luff! or she'll be into us."

The helm was put down; happily the gaff-topsail had not been taken in, and the cutter, having good way on her, shot up to windward. Close on our quarter appeared, towering up, it seemed, into the

sky, a wide spread of canvas. The stranger rushed on past us, the white foam hissing and bubbling at her bows.

"What vessel is that?" shouted Porpoise.

I thought I heard a shout of derisive laughter in return. The next moment, as she came beam on, I distinctly made her out to be a Greek polacre brig.

"The pirate—the pirate!" shouted all hands.

"We had a near chance of being run down by the rascal," cried Porpoise; "but we must be after him as soon as we can let the 'Zebra' know in what direction to make chase."

To do this we had to edge away to the southward, firing our guns to call the attention of the man-of-war brig. This was not so easy to do as might be supposed. We stood on and on, blazing away to no effect. We reached the track of the brig, but still we did not find her.

It was difficult to say what we should do next. Daylight came, and we had the satisfaction (a very poor one, thought I,) of seeing her hull down to the eastward, while we had every reason to believe that the chase was merrily bowling away to the westward. There was no use going after the pirate brig by ourselves, so that all we could do was to make sail in the hopes of catching up our friend.

Porpoise bit his nails with vexation. Hearty wanted to get the matter over to return to Malta.

It was noon before we came up with the 'Zebra.' This we should not have done had she not hove to for us. We then had to wait for the 'Trident,' which appeared to the northward, standing towards us.

We were all so confident that the polacre brig which passed us in the night was the pirate, that our naval friends were obliged to be convinced, so we all hove about, and stood back the way we had come in chase.

I think it better to make a long story short. We crowded everything we could carry, and the little 'Frolic' behaved beautifully alongside her big companions, shooting somewhat ahead of them in light winds, and keeping well up with them when there was a sea on.

We scarcely expected that the pirate would attempt to get through the Gut, and therefore we might hope to pick him up inside it. I could not help suspecting, however, that all the time Mr. Sandgate was laughing at us in his sleeve, and that we should see no more of him. So it proved. Ten days were fruitlessly expended in the search, and at the end of that time we were all once more at anchor in Malta harbour.

Hearty very speedily reconciled himself to the dis-

appointment in the society of Miss Mizen. Carstairs was soon at the feet of Mrs. Skyscraper, while I went to inquire for Miss Seton; but as I found Sir Lloyd Snowdon occupying her entire attention, I paid a short visit, and went to dine with Piper on board the 'Trident.'

CHAPTER VII.

LADIES ABOARD.—OUR CREW'S DREAD OF THE CONSEQUENCES. — BUBBLE'S ROMANCE.—THE CAVERN OF PANAMA.—THE PIRATE AND HIS LADY LOVE.—THE MAGIC CAVERN.

We had not been many days in harbour, when Rullock received orders to take a cruise to the westward, to practise his crew, who being mostly raw hands, quickly raised at Plymouth, required no little practice to turn them into men-of-war's men.

As plenty of sea-air had been prescribed for Miss Mizen, and change of scene (not that I think she now required either), it was arranged that she and her mother should take a cruise in the 'Zebra.' Had Mrs. Mizen been his wife, instead of his sister, Captain Rullock could not have taken her, as the rules of the service do not allow a captain to take his wife to sea with him, though he may any other man's wife, or any relative, or any lady whatever.

Under such circumstances it was not to be supposed

that the 'Frolic' would remain at anchor. Accordingly she put to sea with the brig-of-war. Carstairs, however, had metal more attractive to his taste at Valetta, so decided on remaining on shore. We did not fail to miss him, and to wish for his quaint, dry, comic remarks, and apt quotations from Shakspeare. Never, certainly, was a party better constituted than ours for amusing each other, all of us having that indispensable ingredient of harmony, perfect good humour; and had not that arch mischief-maker Cupid found his way among us, we should have continued in united brotherhood till the yacht was laid up.

A light breeze brought off faintly the sound of the evening gun from the castle of St. Elmo, as, in company with the 'Zebra,' we stood away from Malta to the westward. Hearty walked his deck with a prouder air and firmer step than was his wont. Nothing so much gives dignity to a man as the consciousness of having won the affections of a true, good girl. His eye was seldom or never off the brig, even after the shades of night prevented the possibility of distinguishing much more than her mere outline, as her taunt masts and square yards, and the tracery of her rigging appeared against the starlit sky. He had charged Porpoise to have a very sharp look out kept that we might run no chance of parting from our consort; but

not content with that, he was on deck every half-hour during the night to ascertain that his directions were obeyed.

"I say, Bill, the gov'nor seems to fancy that no one has got any eyes in his head worth two farthing rush-lights but hisself, this here cruise," I heard old Sleet remark to his chum, Frost. "What can a come over him?"

"What, don't you know, Bo?" answered Bill; "I thought any one with half an eye could have seen that. Why, he's been and courted the niece of the skipper of the brig there, and soon they'll be going and getting spliced, and then good-bye to the 'Frolic.' She'll be laid up to a certainty. It's always so. The young gentlemen as soon as they comes into their fortunes goes and buys a yacht. We'll always be living at sea, say they. It goes on at first very well while they've only friends comes aboard, but soon they takes to asking ladies, and soon it's all up with them. Either they takes to boxing about in the Channel, between the Wight and the main; for ever up and down anchor, running into harbour to dine, and spending the day pulling on shore, waiting alongside the yacht-house slip for hours, and coming aboard with a cargo of boat cloaks and shawls, or else, as I have said, they goes and gives up the yacht altogether."

Old Sleet gave a munch at his grub, and then replied :—

"But if I don't judge altogether wrong by the cut of this here young lady's jib, I don't think she's one of those who'd be for wishing her husband to do any such thing. When she came aboard of us, t'other day, she stepped along the thwarts just as if she'd been born at sea. Says I to myself, when I saw her, she's a sailor's daughter, and a sailor's niece, and should be a sailor's wife; but if what you say is true, Bo, she's going to be next door to it, as a chap may say, and that's the wife of a true, honest, yachtsman. No, no, there's no fear, she won't let him lay up the 'Frolic' depend on't."

"Well, I hope so," observed Frost; "I should just like to have a fine young girl like she aboard, they keeps things alive somehow, when they are good, though when they are t'other they are worse than one of old Nick's imps for playing tricks and doing mischief."

"You are right there again, and no mistake, Bo," answered Sleet. "I once sailed with a skipper who had his wife aboard; I never seed such goings on before nor since. The poor man couldn't call his soul his own, or his sleep his own. She was a downright double-fisted woman, a regular white sergeant. She

wouldn't allow a drop of grog to be served out without she did it, nor a candle end to be burned without logging it down; she almost starved the poor skipper —she used to tell him it was for his spirit's welfare. He never put the ship about without consulting her. One day, when it was blowing big guns and small arms, she was out of sorts, and says he,

"'Molly, love, I think we ought for to be shortening sail, or we may chance to have the masts going over the sides.'

"'Shorten sail?' she sings out, 'let the masts go, and you go with them, for what I care. Let the ship drive, she'll bring up somewhere as well without you as with you.'

"The poor skipper hadn't a word to say, but for his life he daren't take the canvas off the ship.

"'My love, it blows very hard,' says he again, in a mild, gentle voice.

"'Let it blow harder,' answers the lady; and you might have supposed it was a boatswain's mate who'd swallowed a marlin-spike who spoke.

"Presently down came the gale heavier than ever on us. Crack, crack, went the masts, and in another second we hadn't a stick standing.

"'Where's the ship going to drive to, now?' asks the skipper, turning to his wife. 'I've been a fool a

long time, but I don't mean to be a fool any longer; just you get the ship put to rights, or overboard you go.'

"'How am I to do that same?' asks Mrs. Molly, very considerably mollified; 'I don't know how.'

"'Then overboard you goes,' says the skipper, quite coolly, but firmly. 'If the wind shifts three or four points only we shall have an ugly shore under our lee, which will knock every timber of the ship into ten thousand atoms in no time, and you may thank yourself for being the cause of the wreck.'

"'Oh, spare my life, spare my life, and I'll never more interfere with the duty of the ship,' cries the lady, in an agony of fear.

"The captain pretended to be softened. 'Well,' says he, 'take the oaths and go below, and I'll think about it.'

"Mrs. Molly, as we always called her, sneaked to her cabin without saying another word. All hands set to work with a will, and obeyed the skipper much more willingly than we had ever done before. We got jury masts up, and carried the ship safely into port, but from that time to this I've always fought shy of a ship with petticoats in the cabin, and so I always shall, except I happen to know the sort of woman who wears them."

I was much amused with old Sleet's remarks, and in most respects I agreed with him.

A day or two afterwards the crew had their suspicions confirmed by the appearance of Mrs. and Miss Mizen on the deck of the cutter. In the meantime Hearty had been constantly on board the brig-of-war. He dined on board every day, as indeed we all did, only we dined in the gun-room, and he with the captain and ladies. The accommodation, however, on board the brig was rather confined, and as the weather promised to continue fine, he became naturally anxious to get them on board the yacht. At last he broached the subject. Old Rullock did not object; the ladies finding that there was nothing incorrect in the proceeding were very willing; and to give them more accommodation, an exchange was effected between them and Bubble, who took up his quarters on board the brig. I should have gone also, but Porpoise begged I would remain and keep him company, so I doubled up in his cabin to give the ladies more accommodation. Hearty took Snow's berth, and the old man was very glad on such an occasion to swing in a hammock forward. The thought of those days are truly sunny memories of foreign seas.

Miss Mizen, by her kind and lively manners, her readiness to converse with the crew, her wish to pick

up information about the sea and the places they had visited, and their own histories, and her unwillingness to give trouble, soon won the love of all on board; while her mother, whose character was very similar to her daughter's; was a general favourite, and I heard old Sleet declare to Frost that the old lady wasn't a bit like Mrs. Molly Magrath, and as for the young girl she was an angel, and old as he was he'd be ready to go round the world to serve her, that he would.

As there was a constant communication kept up between the brig and the cutter, Bubble paid us a daily visit, and used frequently to dine on board. We had an early hour for that meal, so that we could enjoy plenty of daylight after it. We had, of course, described to Miss Mizen the stories we had told, and had proposed to tell at the early part of the cruise, and she naturally was very anxious to hear some more of a similar character. We had especially told her of Bubble's powers in that line; therefore, the next time he came on board she attacked him. Will, as I before remarked, was most excusably slightly vain of his talents that way, so he did not attempt to deny the impeachment.

"Then do, pray, Mr. Bubble, let us hear one of your stories forthwith. Have you not something

ready?" said Miss Mizen, in a tone which was irresistible.

"Happily I have a tale which is suited to be told on an evening like this, when the calm sea, and the bright sky, may well remind us of the romantic regions of the tropics. There the scenery of my tale is laid; I can speedily produce it if I may be allowed."

Bubble forthwith descended to the cabin which had been his and produced from a locker a tolerably thick roll of manuscript. Several officers from the brig were present, and coffee being brought round while the whole party were seated on deck, he opened his paper, and cleared his voice. He certainly had no reason to complain of want of attention in his audience. "The following is the title I have given to my tale," said he:—

THE CAVERN OF PANAMA; OR, THE PIRATE'S TREASURE.

THE PIRATE AND HIS LADY-LOVE.

On the coast of that irregularly-shaped strip of land which joins the two vast continents of the New World, and is generally known as Central America, is a deep bay, called the Bay of Honduras. At the furthest end of the bay is a narrow and long inlet, which, after

a distance of some miles from the sea again widens, and forms what is denominated the Gulf of Dolce; but it might much more justly be considered a lake, for such it appears in every respect to those navigating its waters.

It is a wild and sequestered spot, the scenery grand and majestic in the extreme. The western, or innermost shores, are composed of almost precipitous cliffs, many hundred feet in height, beyond which appear ranges of blue mountains, of many fantastic shapes, amid which rises the burning mountain of Fuego, unweariedly vomiting forth flames of fire and streams of burning lava, with showers of red-hot stones and dense masses of black smoke, which hang like a funeral pall over the scene of desolation and havoc. The surrounding country is, however, rich and fertile, and produces all the trees and fruits of the tropics. In the days of which we write it was inhabited by a powerful tribe of Indians, who had stoutly refused to bend their necks to the yoke of the bloodthirsty and gold-loving Spaniards.

In a sheltered cove, surrounded by thick groves of trees on the northern shore of the gulf, lay a powerfully-armed vessel. She was anchored close into the shore, and so completely screened by the foliage of the lofty trees, that she could not have been seen by any

vessel passing outside the cove, had one by chance ventured thither, which was not probable, as the very existence of the gulf was unknown in general to Europeans, except to some of the roving bands of freebooters, who at that time infested those seas in great numbers. The vessel was evidently being refitted, for her sails were unbent, her topmasts were struck, and her yards were on deck, while her crew were engaged, some on shore in front of tents making rope, mending sails, and shaping spars, and others on board in rattling down the shrouds, in painting her sides, scraping the masts, and other operations necessary to prepare her for sea. All her people were employed in one way or another, and all seemed working with a will as if eager to get what they were about finished with speed.

Near the summit of a cliff which rose at some little distance from the water, and overlooked the cove, sat a man, sheltered from the rays of the sun by a projecting rock. He was dressed in nautical costume, and more, perhaps, from the air with which he wore it, than from the costliness of the materials, he was evidently of the rank of an officer. He was young, of a good figure, and had a handsome countenance, though it was much bronzed by the suns of a tropical clime, and furrowed by the storms to which it

had been exposed, perhaps, also, by care and dissipation. "The 'Serpent' will soon be ready for sea, and I shall find no further excuse for remaining here," he soliloquised. "My men are anxious to be once more following their wild calling on the ocean, and yet I cannot tear myself from her. I, whom once the very smell of the fresh sea breeze would make frantic to tread the deck of my gallant bark on the tossing wave, now sigh to remain on shore. I thought not that woman had the power to enchain me. Yet she is beautiful. A mind pure and fresh from the great fountain source of nature, in a form of angelic mould, so soft and feminine, yet so full of life and animation, so joyous, and yet so earnest. That beaming smile which plays over her countenance as she sees me approach were enough to win an anchorite from his devotions. How can I tear myself from her; and yet, how can I carry her away to live among the rude lawless spirits with whom I am surrounded? Then again, how can I be content to pass a life of dull inactivity in exchange for the wild excitement which has become necessary to my very existence? I should sicken and die from idleness. I should do wisely to see her no more, to hurry at once on board, to get to sea at once,—the vessel might be ready by the morning, and to endeavour to forget her in the tumult of the

raging battle. But then I should break her heart; I should be her murderer—I, who have vowed to love and protect her—I, in whom she has placed the full confidence of her guileless soul. But I have also vowed to abide by my ship and men, through good or ill, while our dark flag flies over the dancing wave."

The speaker rose up, and as he stretched his arm towards the spot where the vessel lay at anchor in the bay below, he exclaimed—

"My brave comrades, I will not desert you. For your sakes I will quit all that has lately made life dear. For your sakes I will sacrifice—"

His words were cut short by a hand being laid on his arm, and by a voice exclaiming in his ear,

"What agitates you? Are you holding converse with the spirits of the air, that you thus speak when no one is by to listen?"

He started, his bosom heaved with emotion, and he threw his arm round a beautiful girl, who had stolen unperceived by him to his side. Her figure was small and graceful in the extreme; her costume showed that she belonged to the Indian race; her brow was bound by a circlet of gold, confining her hair, which fell in long tresses down her back; her robe was composed of feathers curiously interwoven, and a mantle of the same material was thrown over her shoulders, and

fastened across her bosom by a clasp of gold, while her feet were protected by sandals richly ornamented.

"Tell me what you were saying, Hernan," she continued, in a soft musical voice, as she seated herself by his side on a rock from which he had risen. "You have been much agitated of late, and I must know the cause."

"Why did you come here to seek me, dear one? I told you I should return shortly," he answered, evasively, for he could not bring his tongue to speak the truth.

"My father sent me to bring you to him. He is anxious for your assistance at his councils," she replied. "But you have not told me the reason of your agitation, and the melancholy I have seen brooding on your countenance."

He gazed at her for some minutes without speaking, while her hand was clasped in his, and she looked up with inquiring wonder in his countenance.

He at length spoke.

"Tara!" he said, "you see yon bark in the bay below, and those busy men. I am their chief, and bound to them by vows as strong as can bind man to man. I am what the world calls a pirate,—an outlaw; banished from my home and country; my

hand is against every man, and every man's hand is against me. Poverty, with a proud and ambitious spirit, drove me to commit crimes, and hurled me from my position in society; wealth alone can restore me to that place. That wealth I can alone find on the ocean. Wealth gives power, and with that at my command I can return to my country, and set my enemies at defiance. Yon distant ocean is the field on which I reap my golden harvest. Some I have already collected, and a few months more of my hitherto successful career will enable me to amass sufficient to satisfy my utmost desires. Hear me, Tara. I will then return to you, and you shall accompany me to those distant lands as my bride. There, with your beauty and my wealth, we will defy the envy of all who know us."

"What is wealth?" asked the young girl. "Have you not here all you can desire? Is not my father a chief? Has he not more power than any neighbouring cacique? and does he not promise that when you are his son-in-law you shall succeed him? Then why quit me at all? I would go with you to the furthermost parts of the world; I would share with you joyfully the dangers of the tempest and the strife, if it were necessary; but surely that is not required. Oh! Hernan, be content with what my father and I

can afford you, and seek not after what cannot make you happier."

"Ah! little one, you know, happily, nothing of the world to which I long to return. The power I seek is over civilized men, with knowledge and strength equal to my own. Gold is what I seek; jewels and precious stones; those baubles which idiots value for themselves, wise men for the power they give. If I could find enough of such things to satisfy my wants, I would no longer seek them on the ocean."

"Say you so?" exclaimed the young girl. "Then promise me that you will perform all my wishes, and I will place within your power such stores of gold, and silver, and glittering stones, that you may become the most powerful cacique of your country. There are many dangers to be encountered before you can possess this store; but your heart will not quail before them, and I will share them with you."

"You are practising on my credulity, or are yourself deceived," answered the pirate. "If this store you speak of exists, others long ago would have possessed themselves of it."

"I do not deceive you or myself," replied the Indian girl, with earnestness; "indeed, indeed, I do not. The treasure exists, and shall be yours, provided you follow my directions. Promise me faithfully."

"I promise to do as you may direct," said the pirate. "And now tell me how I am to find the treasure."

"To-morrow, as the sun rises above the ocean, I will conduct you to where it lies concealed," answered Tara. "In the mean time, you must accompany me to my father, and say not to any one what I have told you."

Saying this, she took his hand and led him from the eminence on which they had been standing, by a pathway towards the interior of the country.

THE MAGIC CAVERN.

The ruddy glow which illumined the eastern sky, driving into the far west the shades of night, betokened the approach of the bright orb of day from out of the calm waters of the gulf, as two persons descended a narrow and steep path down the sides of the lofty cliffs which formed its western boundary. One was a man from the far-distant lands of the Old World, the other an Indian girl. She led the way down the dangerous track, and he followed in her unerring footsteps. The scenery was wild and rugged in the extreme. Above them rose rocks, black and shining, and broken into a thousand fantastic shapes, reaching to so vast a height, that, as the eye gazed upward, they seemed to merge

in the blue sky, while below them yawned precipices, over which an incautious step might have hurled them many hundred feet into the waters of the gulf below. Still they proceeded downward by many a devious turn, till at last they reached the very bottom of the cliff, where, to a ledge of rock forming the side of a small natural harbour, they found moored a light canoe.

The canoe was of a size capable of containing only two persons and such provision and tackle as the Indians generally take on their fishing excursions. The pirate chief unmoored the boat, and seating himself in the centre, the Indian maid took her place in the stern, when, with a light paddle which she held in her hand, she guided the course of the bark, while he urged it on over the water. They had till now scarcely spoken a word, for their whole attention had been necessarily engaged in descending the dangerous path.

"Our perils are now about to commence," said the Indian maid, as she impelled the canoe away from the rock. "What we have passed through is as nothing. If we enter the palace of the spirit of the tempest when he is aroused and angry our destruction is certain; but when the great god of our fathers, the bright luminary of day, rises, as he is about to do, in tranquil majesty through the clear sky, heralded by a

calm lustre, as now, we have not much cause for fear: yet has he been known at times suddenly to become excited to fury and to destroy the daring intruders who have ventured into his realm."

"Fear not, loved one, that either the spirit of the tempest or any other spirit shall hurt thee. I am a son of the ocean, and have been accustomed to contend with them all my life. I defy them to harm us," answered the pirate, with a loud laugh, which sounded strange amid the solemn silence which reigned around, as it echoed from rock to rock of the cliffs under which they were steering.

"I fear them not when you are with me," said the maiden. "But still I know their power, and the injury they may do us if we offend them. Therefore do not irritate them by speaking of them without reverence."

"Well, loved one, I will say nothing disrespectful," answered the pirate. "But tell me, how long shall we take to reach the cavern of the tempest?"

"Ere the upper edge of the mighty sun has risen above the water of the gulf we shall be at its entrance," replied Tara. "It is the proper time to venture within its precincts, for then the divinity we adore exerts his power over all evil spirits to protect his faithful votaries, and at that time his beams penetrate

the inmost recesses of the cavern. We shall then also be better enabled to discover the entrance to an inner cavern, where the treasure we seek is stored."

The canoe had hitherto been passing along close under the cliffs, when Tara steered its course towards a promontory which projected forth some way into the sea and hid whatever might be on the other side. The sun had not yet risen, but every instant the glow on the sky was growing warmer and warmer, and a glittering hue, the false edge of the great luminary, had already appeared, when, just as he himself arose, suddenly doubling the point, a scene such as it is impossible for words to describe broke on the sight of the adventurers. Above their heads, for upwards of three hundred feet, arose an arched cavern, like the portico of some mighty building, supported on either side by vast rocks, which seemed like pillars placed there by art, so admirably proportioned did they appear, while the whole roof was fretted by innumerable stalactites, which hung down pure and transparent as crystal, on which the bright rays of the sun now falling, made them seem of bright and glittering gold. Arch beyond arch arose, ornamented with equal lustre, and pillar beyond pillar, while on either side were seen many fantastic shapes and forms, all shining brightly with the same golden hue.

There were temples with tapering spire and slender minaret; fortresses with tower and turrets, castellated walls and dungeon keep; palaces with innumerable windows and arched gateways,—every style of architecture was there. Nor were the forms of rural nature omitted. There were mountains and valleys, hills covered with villages, trees and waterfalls. Interspersed among them, too, might be seen gigantic figures of animals: the ponderous elephant, with his trunk and tusks, the slender-necked giraffe, the fierce lion and tiger, the horse and ox. Reptiles, too, were seen as if ready to crawl forth from their hiding-places; the crocodile and serpent, the toad and beetle; while birds innumerable seemed prepared for flight from the summit of some pinnacled rock; and the human form in every possible shape and character. The monarch was there seated on his throne, with bearded face and sceptre in hand; the warrior with his bow ready drawn, or his battle-axe about to strike. Sometimes only vast heads could be distinguished, or human faces with bodies of animals. They were of all sizes, and many reached even to the lofty roof of the cavern; but the largest and most perfect of all was a figure of severe countenance, seated beneath a fretted and arched canopy, wearing a crown on his head, a beard reaching to his waist, and robes which seemed blown out by a

powerful blast. In his right hand he held a staff, in the other a coil of rope. His head supported the roof of the vast cavern, his feet touched the water.

The pirate uttered an exclamation of surprise as he beheld this magnificent and beautiful scene.

"Behold!" whispered Tara, as she pointed to the last-mentioned figure; "yonder is the spirit of the tempest. He now sits enthroned in calm dignity, heedless of our intrusion. The staff he holds is to stir up the whirlwind and tempest; with the rope he curbs their fury when they have performed his bidding. We must offer a sacrifice at his shrine, ere we venture to proceed in search of the treasure; that must be sought for far up in the interior, beyond where the spirit sits enshrined, in deep gloom, in silence, and terrors unnumbered. See, that basket contains fit victims to sacrifice to the spirit of the tempest—fowls of the air, which wing their flight amid the raging storm towards the upper skies. We will hasten to reach his altar ere the hour of sacrifice has passed."

While she was speaking, the pirate had, at her bidding, again begun to urge on the canoe, which she guided into the centre of the cavern. Not only were the roof and every projecting part of the sides shining with a golden hue, but the mirror-like surface of the water reflected every pillar and pinnacle, turret and

tower, human form and shape of beast, with the most perfect exactness, into the very furthest interior. It seemed as if they were floating through a golden atmosphere within a globe of gold. Not a breath of air was stirring, not a sound was heard but the splash of the oar as it touched the water, and the ripple of the canoe as it clave its way onward. Gentle as were these sounds, they were echoed from every recess and inlet of this wonderful cave, till they were lost far, far away in the interior.

As they proceeded they could perceive long galleries extending on either side, ornamented with stalactites of so clear a nature that they reflected the light from those which first received it from the sun itself, and carried it far away from rock to rock till the same golden hue was transmitted into the inmost recesses of the cavern. No temple built by mortal hands, though adorned with the most lavish expenditure that art could suggest to captivate the senses, ever presented an appearance to be compared to this in its superb magnificence. Neither of the voyagers dared to raise their voices lest they should break the spell which it seemed caused this magic spectacle; but Tara pointed with her oar towards the god of storms, and thither guided the canoe.

As they approached the foot of the mighty figure an

altar was seen, with a flight of steps leading to it from the water, and at the back of it was a vast concave shield or slab of clear and polished stalactite. At last they reached the steps which led to the altar, when, fastening the boat to a projecting rock, they began their upward ascent, the pirate carrying the basket by the directions of the Indian maid.

Although at a distance the altar had appeared close down to the water, comparing it to the gigantic height of the surrounding objects, they now perceived that it was raised considerably above it. On arriving at the foot of the altar, the maiden took the basket from the pirate's hands, and putting it on the ground, drew forth two milk-white doves which she placed in freedom on the altar. At the same time her voice, with musical sweetness, first broke the dread silence which reigned throughout that subterranean region.

"Mighty spirit," she said, "deign to receive the offering of thy humble votary, whose fathers for ages past, in the times of their power and glory, have worshipped thee faithfully, and protect her and this stranger from the perils which await them in the enterprise they have undertaken. Mighty spirit, cheer our hearts by a sign that we may know whether thou wilt allow us to proceed, and wilt lighten our path amid the intricate turnings of thy temple."

As she uttered these words, the two doves, which at first had looked startled and confused around, spread their wings and flew upwards, till they reached the arm of the figure, where they perched securely, and at the same moment the vast shield, which had hitherto remained lustreless, brightened up with a glow of fiery hue, like the sun himself, so that the eye was dazzled at beholding it, and the glory it shed forth added a still further lustre to the whole extent of the cavern.

"Thanks, mighty spirit, for thy gracious omen," exclaimed the maid, prostrating herself before the altar, where she remained in silence for a short period, while her companion, lost in amazement, could scarcely collect his senses to comprehend what was going forward.

On rising she took his hand.

"Now, Hernan," she said, "the treasure may be thine, and we must hasten on to discover it ere the bright light which is shed over the cavern has again faded away."

Accordingly they descended to the canoe, and once more embarking, continued as before their onward course.

They passed galleries innumerable, ornamented by the cunning hand of Nature with the same gigantic

and grotesque shapes as those first seen—all of the purest stalactite; and some were so true to the form of the living being, that it was scarcely possible to believe that they had not life; indeed, as one after the other they appeared from the recesses and galleries where they were placed glowing with the glorious brilliancy of the sunlight, they seemed as if they were actually moving from their posts amid the waters.

As they rowed on, the thought of the vast treasure which these wonders guarded recurred to the pirate, and his eagerness to possess it increased.

"When shall we reach the cave, where the treasure itself lies stored?" he asked. "I long to feast my eyes on its glittering heaps, and to feel that at length I possess that which will enable me to set my enemies and all the world at defiance. Tell me how we are able to discover it."

"It lies in the hundredth gallery from the entrance on the left hand," answered the Indian girl; "I have been carefully counting them, we have already passed sixty, and have forty more to reach before we arrive at the spot."

On, on they went. The time seemed long to both, for though they had ventured to speak, their hearts were filled with an awe at the solemn grandeur of the scene, which kept them generally silent. The pirate,

also, felt as if he was the subject of some magical enchantment, and could not tell whether any moment the scene might not dissolve, and they might find themselves amid a chaotic mass of ruin and darkness. He fondly loved the Indian girl, and believed in her love for him; and although he had unhappily very little religious feeling, he yet was somewhat imbued with the superstition general among seamen, especially in those days; and as he knew her to be a heathen, and had just seen her offer a sacrifice to a heathen divinity, he fancied that they might be especially subject to the evil influence of the powers of darkness. His heart, however, was not one to quail before any horrors which a man may face, nor was his arm unnerved by any fears of what he thought might occur. Gallery after gallery was passed, and at length they reached the hundredth from the entrance. There was little difference to mark it from the others, except that, whereas the sea ran through all the rest, this had a pavement of rugged rock considerably raised above the level of the water, with a flight of steps leading to it.

"In yonder gallery is the cavern which contains the treasure," said Tara; "but beware, at its end is a frightful precipice of fathomless depth, towards which a smooth and slippery floor shelves gradually downward; and it is said that many who have attempted to

possess the treasure have fallen down it. But let us hasten; while there is light there is no danger, and whatever your fate may be I will share it with you."

"Brave girl!" exclaimed the pirate, forgetting even his desire to possess the treasure in his admiration of her courage and devotion; "you deserve far more than I can ever give you; but we will onward."

They again landed; after securing the canoe and ascending the steps, Tara holding the pirate's hand, they proceeded, without let or hindrance, along the gallery, looking eagerly into every recess in expectation of finding the treasure. For some time this search was in vain, till, on turning an angle of the gallery, they suddenly came in front of a cavern with a larger entrance than the rest, and into which the blaze of sunlight being reflected, a heap of glittering treasure was exposed to their view, such as the pirate even in his wildest imagining had scarcely conceived. From the nature of the treasure, it had evidently been placed there by human agency. There were chests filled to the brim with gold and silver coin, ingots of gold and bars of silver; there were heaps of plate, urns, and salvers, and every ornament used on the tables of the rich. Churches, too, had been robbed, and sacrilege committed: for there were crucifixes of silver, ornamented with precious stones, chalices, and

other utensils used in administering the holy sacraments; there were caskets, also, of the most valuable jewels, diamonds and pearls, and sapphires and rubies, heaped together in wild profusion; indeed, palaces and churches, and rich argosies, had been ransacked to increase the store of wealth, which, after all the blood which must have been spilt to gain it, there lay utterly useless to man.

The pirate for some time stood silent with amazement, though his companion, valuing little what she saw, regarded it with comparative indifference.

"Here is an abundance of that for which you would peril life and happiness," she said; "more than enough to fill your ship and to satisfy the most greedy desires of your companions."

"It is the wealth of a kingdom," exclaimed the pirate. "Tara, we will bear it hence, and you shall be my queen. The 'Serpent' will carry all that is here, or if not, we will send her back to bring it, for unless some one betray the existence of the treasure, no person is likely to discover it. We will now carry to the canoe some of these caskets of precious jewels to secure some portion of it in case of accident. They are the most valuable, and might alone satisfy the ambition of many men."

"I will help you," said Tara; "but, ah! What is

that? Fly—fly, while there is time. Come this way; not a moment is to be lost, or we perish."

She grasped his arm, and as she led him towards the way they had come, she pointed to the lofty roof, down which a dark shadow was seen gliding.

"See," she continued, "the Spirit of Darkness is taking possession of the domain, and if we hurry not from it while there is light we may be unable to find our way, and may be cast down some of the yawning precipices which surround us. Leave those baubles; what are they compared to life?"

The pirate comprehended at once the danger, and cursed his thoughtlessness in not bringing torches, but there was no help for it. He had, however, secured two caskets, and with those in his grasp he followed his guide. Slowly and surely the shadows descended from the roof, and what an instant before was bright and glittering now assumed a dark and horrid gloom, nor could any of the figures or columns be longer distinguished where it fell. With hurried steps they rushed towards the entrance of the gallery, for once in the canoe they thought that they should be comparatively secure, and the light still shone along the ground and some way up the sides. Yet every instant their danger increased. Downward the darkness descended, like some shapeless monster crawling from

the roof, or as a thick mist covers the landscape; but this looked like something palpable and opaque, as if it would at last crush the adventurers with its weight. The Indian maiden trembled not, nor was dismayed. He on whom she had set her affections, for whom she had encountered the peril, was with her, and at the worst she could but die with him. Of his crimes she thought not; together they might wander over the pleasant hunting-grounds of the departed, and they should be happy. The pirate, who had faced the raging battle, the howling tempest, and death in a hundred different forms, was the one who felt most an undefined dread of the doom which he foresaw might be theirs. It was not so much fear for himself as grief for the fate of her whom he had induced to undertake the adventure; and he would a thousand times rather have been on the deck of his ship engaged in the hottest fight than where he then was. Such thoughts rushed through his mind as they advanced. Lower and lower descended the shade. At last the floor was alone illumined, when with a cry of joy from the lips of Tara, they beheld the steps leading to the canoe. As they had a considerable way to descend, they again emerged into the bright atmosphere. Tara quickly took her seat with the precious caskets, and the pirate seized the oars and pushed out

into the centre of the main cavern. Their dangers were, however, far from over. An extraordinary change had taken place, and instead of being in a palace of brightness and glory they were now in a temple of gloom and horror; the very monsters and shapes which had before appeared harmless and grotesque, now assuming the most terrific and frightful forms, as if about to spring from their recesses and to destroy those who might venture near them. The pirate urged on the canoe with all his might through the water, steered by the unerring hand of the Indian girl; but even his heart almost failed him as he looked over the side, and thought he could see fierce monsters swimming round them in the dark liquid which supported them. Murmuring sounds also assailed their ears with unearthly shrieks and wails, and the very atmosphere they breathed seemed foul and oppressive. Down, down came the mighty mass of darkness. In that also, as the pirate gazed upwards, he could perceive, floating slowly above them, hideous shapes, just distinguishable by their blacker hue. Every instant he expected to feel their cold slimy bodies gliding by him, and as the darkness reached him he bent down his head to escape even for another instant the coming horror. Down, down it came at last, sensibly and palpably; it reached their

shoulders, it descended to the sides of the canoe, it covered the water, and the pirate felt that the most terrible of deaths awaited himself and his companion —to wander about while strength lasted in the intricate mazes of that vast cavern, and then to starve with wealth uncounted piled up near them. The occurrences of his past life rushed over his mind. "This is the punishment for my crimes," he muttered, but his proud heart refused to repent. Even thought, however, was quickly banished by what next occurred.

To add to the horror of the moment, there came forth from every gallery and recess a loud rushing noise with unearthly shrieks, and cries, and groans, and the hitherto calm water became violently agitated, breaking over the sides of the canoe, which, with frightful violence, was turned round and round as if about to be swallowed up in a whirlpool. Even the Indian girl showed her terror by the slight shriek which escaped her, and the daring pirate held his breath. The agitation of the water, and the whirling motion of the canoe, continued for some time, and then as suddenly as it had commenced the turmoil ceased; but what had once occurred might, they felt, happen again, and the Cimmerian darkness in which they were plunged was still more dreadful. At length the

pirate relaxed the exertions he had made to prevent the canoe from upsetting, and gave way to despair. There sat those two human beings in a frail bark amid the black void, surrounded by unknown dangers. The pirate was aroused suddenly by the voice of the Indian girl.

"Row on, row on," she exclaimed, in a tone eager yet suppressed with awe; "I see a glimmering star ahead of the canoe—it may serve to guide us to safety."

Her voice recalled the pirate to himself, and ashamed of his weakness, with renewed vigour he plied his oar, yet he was still as if struck with blindness, for his less clear vision could perceive nothing but darkness around. With intense eagerness he looked out to catch sight, if possible, of the light of which she spoke, for he thought that perhaps her senses might have deceived her. Indeed, he expected every instant to find the canoe striking against the sides of the cavern, or that they had gone up one of the many galleries he had before perceived; but still on, on they rowed without interruption. At last he became sensible, from the peculiar movement of the canoe, that she was carried on by a current, and by trying with his paddle, he felt further convinced of the fact. After straining his eyes, too, for some time

longer, he perceived the star of which Tara spoke, close down, it seemed, to the water, and yet pale and faint. On still they went, but yet it did not appear to increase in size, or rather, it increased so slowly, that nearly an hour elapsed before any difference was perceptible. It did, however, increase, and by the time another hour had passed away it had more than doubled in size and brightness. Weary as the adventurers became, they, after some time, began to recover more the usual tone of their feelings, and to exchange observations, but they were still incapable of anything like conversation. Thus the day, or rather what appeared to them the darkest night, wore on; hour, it seemed, after hour, passed away, and the light grew larger and larger, and brighter and brighter. What appeared to them most strange was, that they should not long before have reached the entrance.

"Surely by this time we should once more have emerged into the open light of day," said Tara; "we have already been a far longer time on our return than we were coming, and are still at a great distance."

"We were then in the bright light, and had hope before us," observed Hernan; "we are now in darkness, and shall feel grateful if we escape with our lives."

He spoke without remembering the caskets of jewels.

"But my weary arms and failing strength tell me that the day is wearing on and the evening approaching," replied Tara; "depend upon it night is not far distant."

"True, love, you must be right," said the pirate, "we have had a current with us, and the water when we came was apparently still. This cavern must communicate with some inland river or lake."

"I know of every lake and stream far and wide," replied Tara; "there are none near here which are likely to fall into the cavern."

"I cannot account for it, but that there is a current I am certain, for I heard it rippling against the sides of the cavern," observed Hernan. "When we get back into the gulf we shall be able to discover the truth."

"Ah!" exclaimed Tara, "but perhaps the mighty spirit of the tempest may have become angry at our long delay, and may prohibit our departure. We have many dangers yet to encounter."

"I fear them not, dearest, for myself, yet I grieve to have brought you to encounter them," answered Hernan; "but having escaped so many already we may surmount the remainder."

While they were speaking, the star had been increasing more rapidly than before, and even a light was perceptible throughout the cavern, though not sufficiently strong to enable them to distinguish objects. It was rather that the darkness was less black and palpable than it had been. This change, slight as it was, gave them renewed spirits and strength, and Hernan plied his oar with greater vigour. The star had now grown to the size of the moon, and went on increasing; so did also the darkness decrease, and a light, such as exists even in the most clouded nights, appeared. This slowly grew stronger and stronger, till the water on which the canoe floated was seen moving, and a faint gleam of light played over it, palely glittering on the bubbles caused by her rapid progress through it, and the drops which fell from the blade of the pirate's oar. Gradually the light increased so much that the sides of the cavern came forth to sight from the shade which enshrouded them; but how changed they appeared to the eyes of the adventurers! Instead of being covered with huge fantastic shapes, and perforated with long galleries, although here and there small glittering stalactites appeared, they were generally of smooth black rock, carved, apparently, by the hand of man, if it were possible to believe that man could have performed

so gigantic a work. The width, also, was far narrower than before, though still probably the channel was some two hundred feet across. More and more the light came on, till the roof was also visible, when it was seen to be of the form of a regular arch, and to be composed of solid masonry of stones of vast size. Hernan had before been awe-struck with the magnificence of the entrance of the cavern as it had appeared at first; he was now surprised and bewildered, as much by the gigantic works with which he found himself surrounded, as by the wonderful changes which had taken place.

"This must be the work of enchantment," he muttered, "and witches have greater power than I thought, or else it is all a dream, the phantom of my senses. I cannot comprehend it."

The bright light of day now cheered their spirits, increasing as they advanced every instant, till, with a cry of joy, Tara exclaimed, that she could perceive the entrance of the cavern, with the blue sea and sky beyond. Still the distance was very great, and to their greater wonder they perceived a bright glow descending over the semicircular space of sky before them, till a blaze, like that of the sun himself, burst on their dazzled sights, lighting up the mighty tunnel far in the distance behind them. This circumstance

added still more to their perplexity, for that it was really the sun they could not believe.

At length they emerged into a wild sea-worn cavern of prodigious extent, the roof and sides composed, it seemed, of black marble, rugged and broken in the extreme. As they looked back they could perceive a well-defined arch of masonry, forming the entrance to the tunnel from whence they had emerged. It was impossible to believe that the cavern was the same by which they had entered, for whereas that was glittering with stalactites and full of light and brilliancy, this, forming a perfect contrast, was on every side of the blackest jet. The fresh air from the ocean came gently into it, and the water rose and fell in glassy undulations as it agitated from without and splashed against the sides. Almost breathless with eagerness and amazement, Hernan urged the light canoe swiftly onward. The entrance to the cavern was passed, and a new scene broke on their sight. The broad blue sea was before them, glittering in the sunshine, the rich sky glowing with a golden hue. On either hand, headland and promontory appeared covered with the graceful palm, the plantain and the cocoa nut, and other trees of tropical growth, while among them in the distance were smiling villages and detached cottages; and on the shores of the sandy bays were many fishing

canoes, drawn up ready for launching. It was, in truth, a bright and beautiful spectacle, but unlike any view on the shores of the Gulf of Dolce.

"It must be; it is the Western Ocean, the mighty Pacific," exclaimed the pirate, "and we have come completely under the Isthmus of Panama."

"There can be no longer any doubt of it," replied Tara. "That cavern is called the Devil's Cave, and it is said that it is at night haunted by evil spirits; and now, as I gaze on those shores, I recognize many spots I know well. Look there, too, the sun himself is sinking into the ocean, a stronger proof that we are looking towards the west."

"It is, indeed, very wonderful; and for your sake, my Tara, I rejoice that we have escaped so many dangers," said Hernan. "We must now devise the best means of returning, for my men will be impatient if they do not hear of me."

"We will row towards yon village to the north," replied the Indian girl; "the people are faithful subjects of my father, and will gladly receive us. To-morrow we will commence our journey towards the east. We will not, however, venture again through the cavern."

The pirate agreed to her proposal, and towards the shore, therefore, they steered their course. They were

received there with the warmest expressions of affection by the people, who were devotedly attached to their Cacique Omru, the father of Tara.

The following morning, accompanied by half the population of the village, they were on their way to the capital of Omru, which lay directly in their route. They had wisely forborne to mention their adventures to the people, and thus it was generally believed that they had come overland by a different route; nor was any one made acquainted with the existence of the cavern of Panama and its many wonders.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONTINUATION OF BUBBLE'S ROMANCE. — THE SAGE'S TALE. — THE UNWELCOME STRANGERS. — THE TREASURE GAINED.

THE SAGE'S TALE.

TARA sat at the feet of her father, the Cacique Omru, and recounted her adventures in the magic cavern. On one side of him stood the pirate Hernan,—on the other, an aged man with a grave countenance and a white beard.

"Now listen," said the old man. "In the early ages of the world this country was inhabited by men of mighty stature, who came in a floating house from the distant regions of the setting sun. They were six times as high as any men of the present day, and ten times as strong, and twelve times as wise in worldly wisdom; but they prided themselves on their stature, and their strength, and their wisdom, and despised the immortal powers which made them, so they dwindled away in size, their strength departed, and their wisdom

became folly, and they perished from the face of the earth. Ere they yet had become foolish they built mighty cities, vast palaces, and gorgeous temples; but the temples were dedicated to the spirits of darkness and not to the spirit of light, their palaces were the abodes of luxury and dissipation, and their cities of crime and disorder. When they perished their cities too were destroyed, and most of the mighty works they had created crumbled to decay. Some few still remain as monuments of their pride and fall; and the hunter carried away by the chase, ofttimes comes suddenly among them, and wonders what manner of men could have piled up those huge blocks of hewn stone.

"Their name and their language are unknown, but that they had learning far above the learning of the men of the present day, and that they could read the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and that they were deeply versed in the mysteries of the universe, there is no doubt. They still held communication with the lands from whence they came, and brought thence precious stones and fine cloths and spices, and valuables of all sorts, to add to the beauty of their buildings, the richness of their clothing, or the luxury of their living. At length their science informed them that there were regions towards the rising of the sun of great wealth, inhabited by people small in stature, yet

of power equal to their own, so they longed to go and take possession of their wealth, and to destroy the people, lest they should grow more powerful than themselves, and come and humble them. However, this narrow portion of land intervened to separate the ocean of the setting sun from the ocean of the rising sun, and they were unable to build ships, such as those in which they had come, nor did they know how to convey them from one ocean to the other. At first they thought of making a road over the land, but the ships broke to pieces in the attempt; they next thought of cutting a channel from one sea to the other, but mountains and other impediments were in their way. At last, while their chiefs and wise men were consulting on the subject, a fisherman who was out on the sea in search of some of the monsters which then existed, discovered a vast cavern in a black rock, horrid and dreadful to the sight. He at once believed that it was a fit temple to dedicate to the powers of darkness, whom he worshipped; and when he came home, and gave the account of what he had discovered, the neighbouring people flocked thither in numbers, and it has ever since been called the Devil's Cave. Among others, went some of the chiefs and wise men, and when they saw the vast hollow in the rock, and that it reached far under the land, they thought that, by

means of the art in which they excelled, it might be made to penetrate completely through the isthmus. So they called all their cunning workmen together, and they began the mighty undertaking. They blocked up the entrance of the Devil's Cavern down to the bottom of the sea, and having emptied it of water, they hewed a vast tunnel through the earth, which they arched with huge blocks of stone, such as no workmen of the present day could form.

"For two years they laboured at the work, and triumphed in their pride at its success. In another year they believed that they should open their tunnel on to the eastern ocean, when, on a sudden, a loud roaring noise was heard; the rock before them gave way, a fierce tempest swept along the tunnel, the waters of the ocean rushed through, and carried them, and their tools, and the stones they had collected, far out into the western sea. It was a punishment for their impiety; for they had attempted to penetrate into the great Temple of the Sun, made at the commencement of the world by no mortal hands.

"For ages that temple was never visited, till it was discovered by our fathers in the days of their glory. In those days they used to resort thither to worship; but when the white men came from the east and carried them off captive, and destroyed their palaces

and their temples, they forgot that mighty temple, and the very knowledge of its existence faded away from the memories of most men. A few only of the wise men knew of it, and it was recorded in their prophecies, that it should once again be discovered and once again lost; but that on the third discovery a new era of glory for this land should commence, and that the country should become covered with houses and fields, and that many people and large ships should come from the east, and should pass through it, and should carry their wealth even to the far west, and that there should be much traversing to and fro, and no longer poverty and misery in the land. The second discovery you have made; ages, perchance, may yet pass away before it is a third time discovered, for it would be ruin and destruction to us and to our children, if we were to show it to the white men, the cruel Spaniards; for they would come and carry us away captive to work for them, to build their cities and houses, to cultivate their fields, and to clear out this very tunnel. No, let us be wise,—let us say nothing about it, and we may be safe."

"You are right, my aged friend," observed Hernan. "For my part I will say nothing about it, provided I can secure the treasure I beheld in the cavern. Nothing shall prevent my visiting the spot again."

"If you run the risk, you must take the consequences, my son," replied the sage. "The Cavern of the Sun has often been visited, and may be so again. It was the resort of some of your countrymen, who came hither to avenge our wrongs on the Spaniards, and to collect wealth for themselves, and this treasure was a large portion of their booty which they were unable to carry off. You are welcome to it, for to us it is of no value. Of gold and silver we have abundance, if we chose to collect it, and jewels cannot give us food, or houses, or clothing. Take, then, the treasure and share it with your companions, and depart in peace to your own land."

"I will do as you desire," answered Hernan. "And now, cacique, I have another favour to ask. I love your daughter, and I would take her with me as my wife—a treasure I prize far more than the glittering heaps now in the cavern."

The cacique on hearing these words, turned his glance on his daughter.

"How is this, Tara?" he said. "Have you bestowed your heart on this stranger? Speak, girl. If you love him, I will not thwart your wishes."

The Indian maiden looked at her parent, and then at Hernan.

"My love for you, my father, is deep and old, and

for your sake I am ready to die; that which I feel for this stranger is new, and such as I cannot find words to tell, but the new conquers the old. If you forbid me not, I go where my heart leads me:" saying this, she rose, and put her hand in that of Hernan.

Thus the pirate won his bride.

THE UNWELCOME STRANGERS.

The pirate Hernan stood on the rock overlooking the bay, and Tara was by his side. The schooner lay in the centre of the harbour. Her yards were across, her sails were bent, and she was ready for sea. It was towards evening, the rocks and lofty hills on the west already cast their shadows over the water. Not a cloud dimmed the bright blue sky, and a light air, which came up the gulf from the sea, just rippled its surface with miniature waves, which fell with a gentle murmur on the shore.

"It is our last evening, my Tara, in your native land," said the pirate; "to-morrow we will secure the treasure, and sail from hence to a country where your beauty will be prized, and where our riches will purchase lands, and titles, and all that man can desire. A glorious future, my loved one, is in store for us."

"I care not for titles or wealth, or aught else, so

that I am with you," replied Tara. "I would willingly have passed my days here, with you by my side—but, ah! what are those three white dots we see in the far distance, towards the entrance of the gulf?"

The pirate looked attentively in the direction towards which she pointed.

"They are the sails of three ships, as I live!" he exclaimed; "and large ones, too, or I am mistaken. They may be friends, but we have few such, and my heart misgives me that they are enemies. Well, fortunately, we are ready for sea, and prepared to meet them, should they prove such; though three to one are fearful odds. Tara, we have no time to lose; we must at once on board, and get ready to receive them either as friends or foes. Our boat waits for us at the foot of the cliffs. I would leave you on shore, love, but we may be able to secure the treasure during the night, and pass these strangers in the dark, when the wind towards the morning comes off the land—at all events, we do not wish them to share the treasure."

He spoke as they were descending the cliff to the boat. A few minutes served to carry them to the side of the vessel, where loud cheers from the crew greeted their arrival.

"Welcome to our brave captain and his Indian bride," shouted the pirates. "He was bold before,

he will be bolder still, now he has a wife to fight for. He has come to lead us on to victory and to wealth. Huzza—huzza—huzza!"

Louder and louder grew the cheers as they reached the deck, and the men pressed eagerly forward to catch a glance of the lovely countenance of their chief's young wife. He had long commanded them, and though stained by many a crime, he had gained their respect by his bravery and success, their love by his firmness and kindness. They were rough and ignorant, he was refined and educated, and he brought all his talents and sagacity into play to govern them. So well did he contrive to bend their wild spirits to his will, that they became virtually his slaves, and yet all the time they did not feel his yoke upon their necks.

"Thanks, my brave fellows," he exclaimed; "I know your love, and will try to merit it. And now I must tell you, that just as I left the shore I saw three ships coming up the gulf; as the breeze is failing, they may not be off here till to-morrow morning; and, if they are, as I suspect, enemies, we must fight them, or manage to pass by them out to sea, without their perceiving us. However, in the mean time, I have an enterprise to which to lead you, which, if successful, will enrich us all. There is danger to

be encountered, but from that I know none of you will shrink."

"What is it, captain? We are ready to follow wherever you lead," exclaimed a hundred voices.

"I felt sure you would," answered Hernan; and he gave an account of his adventures in the cavern, and explained briefly to them his intentions regarding the removal of the treasure, which afforded great satisfaction to his crew.

Having sent an officer on shore to watch the movements of the strangers, the captain set every one on board to work, to prepare the ship for action. It was a busy scene, such as Tara had never before witnessed. Some were employed in getting up powder and shot; some in sharpening cutlasses, and cleaning pistols and muskets; others loaded and ran out the guns; some, again, got the boats ready, or unmoored the ship. Meantime, the pirate officer, who had been sent on shore, climbed to the summit of the cliff, where he could watch the approach of the three strange sail. They came steadily, though slowly, up the centre of the gulf, and at last he was able to make them out to be three large ships, and from the cut of their sails, and their general appearance, he felt persuaded that they were Spanish men-of-war. The wind, however, failing them, they were

compelled to anchor, when, the shades of night shutting them out from view, he hurried down to carry his information on board.

"The news was received by the pirates without any feeling of dismay. They had so frequently and successfully encountered forces far superior to themselves, that, trusting to the talent of their leader, not a man had any doubt of the result on this occasion. Their greatest danger lay in being attacked during the night by the enemy's boats; for, with a good breeze, in their light, easily-manœuvred craft, they had little fear of being able to scrape by the three ships without much damage.

"Now, my men," exclaimed the captain, "the time has arrived to commence our enterprise, and in a few hours we shall have gold sufficient to make every one of us wealthy men for life."

At these words, the crew cheered, the anchor was got up, the boats were sent ahead, and the schooner began slowly to move out towards the entrance of the cavern.

THE TREASURE GAINED.

There was no moon in the sky, neither did the stars shine forth to guide the pirates in their course, for a dense mist hung like a funeral pall over sea

and land, and Hernan's superior skill and knowledge could alone have enabled them to venture on quitting their anchorage. No light could be made use of lest the Spaniards should see it, and none but seamen's eyes, long accustomed to work in darkness, could have perceived any object beyond the length of a man's arm. The sturdy crew, however, went about their duty as if it was broad daylight, and the men in the boats gave all their strength to towing out the vessel. Hernan's intention was to take the schooner to the mouth of the cavern, then to go up in the boats to bring down the much-coveted treasure, and as soon as it was on board to make sail and to endeavour to pass by the Spaniards without observation. He laughed at the idea of their rage and disappointment when they found that he and his followers had completely eluded them.

It is extraordinary what discipline had been introduced among those rude men, and how readily they obeyed orders when they felt that obedience was necessary for the common good. Not a sound, consequently, was heard along the busy decks, except the low voices of the officers as they issued the requisite orders, and the gentle splash of the muffled oars as they dipped into the water. Hernan stood near the helmsman to direct him how to steer, and

by his side was his faithful Tara, who never for a moment left this post. To her all was strange, new, and wonderful; she was not afraid, because he was with her, but she saw ample cause for alarm in the fierce looks of the men, their coarse voices, and strange language, though they were prepared to treat with due respect their captain's bride. The progress of the vessel was very slow, for not a breath of air was blowing from any quarter to fill her canvas, and the process of towing is very tedious—indeed, the risk of approaching that rocky shore under sail would have been very great, and even now there was some danger, though the lead was kept going from the headmost boat to give them warning in time of any sunken rock, or sand-bank in their course. Look-outs, also, were stationed in every part of the vessel to watch for the approach of the enemy, should they have been enabled by any partial breeze to draw nearer to them.

The Indian girl watched all the proceedings in silence; but the manner in which the vessel was guided in her course astonished her most.

"How is it," at length she asked, "that you know in what direction to steer your ship towards the cavern, when that is far hid from your sight?"

"By this instrument—the mariner's faithful friend,"

he answered, showing her the binnacle, in which a burning light shed its rays on a compass; "the helmsman's eye is now intently fixed on it. One line always points to the north, the opposite to the south, and others to the rising and setting of the sun. Whatever way the vessel turns, so turns that point. Thus, when it was daylight, I marked well how the mouth of the cavern bore from hence by the compass, just midway between the north and where the sun sets; and thus I know even in the darkest nights, by following the same line, that I shall reach the spot at which I aim. It is a wonderful invention, but there is nothing in it of magic, as you may perchance suppose; and before our voyage is over I shall have to show you many other things which will not the less surprise you."

"It is a world full of wonders," said the Indian girl, musing. "I feel that our very existence is wonderful. Tell me, Hernan, how soon can we hope to reach the beautiful land you speak of where you were born?"

"Many days, perhaps several moons, must pass away before we reach it," replied her husband.

"What! is the sea of so great an extent as that would signify?" she observed. "I wonder how men are found bold enough to venture on its trackless wilds."

"The thirst for wealth lures us on, my Tara—the restless spirit of adventure. The sea is the safeguard of our country; were it not for that, the fierce men who now seek on it an outlet for their unruly spirits would create disturbances and rebellions at home. It was fortunate for my country and myself that I had the ocean as my resource, or I should have proved a troublesome subject to my king."

Thus the pirate and his bride conversed as the vessel glided forward on her perilous expedition.

It must be understood that the schooner's course lay from one side of the gulf, the north shore, to its head or westernmost point, and thus that she was almost crossing the bows of the Spanish ships, if they remained where they had been seen at sunset. While the captain's attention was engaged in watching the course of the vessel, Tara's gaze was turned anxiously towards the east, where her eyes had been attracted by seeing what she took to be bright sparks, like fire-flies, playing in the air. She pointed them out to Hernan, but his vision was not so acute as hers, and he thought she had been mistaken, for he observed nothing, and the circumstance was disregarded. For full an hour the pirates persevered in towing the vessel, for although in their boats they might have reached the mouth of the cavern in little

more than half that time, yet Hernan was unwilling to leave the vessel in the presence of an enemy, without the whole strength of his crew on board, so long as would have been required to get the treasure and return. He thought, too, that a light breeze might possibly spring up and enable them to get up to the cavern under sail, which, notwithstanding the danger, was preferable to the slow mode of progress they were compelled to employ.

Every one on board was eager to feast their eyes on the promised treasure, and thus were doubly anxious to spread their canvas to the wind. As the officers and men walked the deck, they spread the wet palms of their hands to every point of the compass to discover if one felt colder than another, but no difference for a long time was perceptible. At last a faint breeze, so slight that by no other means could it have been discovered, came over the land from the north; the topsails were let fall, the foresail was hauled out, and the mainsail hoisted, and the vessel slipped more easily than before through the water. The wind, however, soon died away; but after a little time it returned with greater force than before, and gaining further strength, the boats were called on board, with the exception of one, which proceeded a-head, to sound and give warning of danger.

It was a time of breathless interest, for the risk was great. Every man was at his post, ready to clew up the sails and bring the vessel, if necessary, to an anchor. Each instant they expected to reach their destination. Hernan now went to the fore part of the vessel, to watch for the lofty cliffs by the side of the cavern, if perchance they were to be distinguished through the gloom. Notwithstanding the darkness, at length he beheld them rising like a black wall to the sky, and appearing ready, from their vast height, to fall forward and overwhelm the vessel. The cliffs were not so near as they seemed; the helm was kept up, and the schooner, doubling the headland, stood across into the very centre of the cavern's mouth. In a minute the sails were furled, and the anchor was let go, though the length of the cable which was required showed the great depth of the water. There lay the vessel under that mighty arch of rock, on one side the comparatively clear expanse of sky and sea, on the other a mass of impenetrable darkness—the veil which shrouded the longed-for treasures. Dispositions were now rapidly made for the expedition. Three boats, with trusty crews, were to go. Hernan took the command in one, with two of his officers in the others. The men were all armed and provided with torches. The vessel was left under charge of the first-lieutenant,

while her guns were loaded and run out, and her men prepared for action, or any emergency. Hernan would have left Tara on board, but she insisted on accompanying him, and sharing all the dangers to which she believed he would be exposed, either supernatural or from being of mortal mould. She therefore sat by his side as he steered the leading boat. Even the boldest of the pirates entered on the expedition with awe and doubt, and would have rather, by a hundred times, engaged the three Spanish ships at once, or gone through any other work, however hazardous, to which they were accustomed in the light of day. But they were not the men to flinch when their captain set them an example. Hernan had had a compass placed in his boat, by which he hoped to find his way up the wider part of the cavern; but they had proceeded only a short distance when he found that it varied so rapidly, by some attractive influences in the cavern, that it could not be depended on, and he was reluctantly compelled to order a torch to be lighted, though he was afraid, by so doing, of alarming his people by the dreadful shapes with which he knew they were surrounded, and which he expected, as soon as the light blazed up, to behold as if starting forth into life. There was, however, no help for it, as it would be impossible otherwise to find their way. A light was

struck, and in an instant a blazing torch illuminated the gloom. If in the glorious light of the rising sun the figures had appeared horridly fantastic, doubly dreadful did they now seem in the flickering, uncertain glare of the torch. A cry of terror escaped even the stout hearts of the pirates as they looked up and beheld directly above their heads, and frowning down on them as if in anger at their intrusion, the monster of the cavern, the mighty figure of the God of the Tempest, and in the further distance shapes of all forms and sizes just emerging from the gloom. Even Tara, who had seen them before, shrunk closer to the side of Hernan for protection. He also, as he gazed at them, could scarcely persuade himself that they were not moving, as the glare of the torch played over them. The head of the giant idol seemed to bend forward, his eyes rolled, and his vast arm shook; the serpents which lay in coils at his feet lifted up their heads, and appeared as if about to dart forward; the lions and tigers and other wild beasts seemed crouching down to spring on their prey, while every tower and minaret, every palace and church spire, castle wall or street of city, seemed to be glowing in the light of a distant conflagration.

Every feature of the wondrous scene was too flickering and uncertain to appear real, and each man, as he

gazed, believed himself to be the victim of a delusion. The light did not penetrate as did that of the sun into the inner recesses of the cavern; indeed it was with difficulty that Hernan could count the entrance to each gallery so as to reckon their distance from the one which contained the treasure. The glare, however, reached as far as the schooner, which was discerned at the mouth of the cavern floating calmly on the dark water, the light just tinging her sides and her taper masts and spars, and showing the broad arch of the cavern overhead. As they beheld these strange sights, the pirates were about to pull back to the ship. It was some time, indeed, before they recovered from their astonishment and terror. Most of them believed it to be the work of enchantment, and expected every instant to find themselves in the grasp of the monster idol, or attacked by some of the ferocious beasts they saw in the distance. At last they were aroused to exertion by the voice of their commander.

"What is it you are afraid of, my men?" he asked, in an encouraging tone. "Do you think that the blocks of stone you see around can be endued with life to injure us? I tell you I have passed them safely before, and if you prove brave fellows, worthy of your former selves, as I have known you, we shall again pass them safely laden with wealth. If we go back

now, like dogs with their tails between their legs, we shall lose our prize altogether, and have every chance of falling into the tender hands of the Spaniards, who, let me tell you, will run us up like hounds to their yard-arms without mercy."

This speech had the desired effect. The men cheered, and vowed that they were ready to face a whole legion of devils, with Hernan at their head. As their voices rose together, the roof and sides of the cavern echoed with the sound, which reverberated into every gallery and recess, till each strange monster seemed endued with the power of speech as well as with life, and to have joined their voices in one wild concert. The noise rose and fell as it was carried along, often varying in sound; and shrieks, and cries, and groans, and shouts of mocking laughter burst forth, and were heard proceeding from the furthest recesses of the cavern.

The men now looked more aghast than before at each other, and again Hernan had to exert his utmost influence over them to induce them to proceed. Some, indeed, seemed inclined to mutiny, and whispered among themselves that their captain's Indian bride had bewitched him, and would probably lead them all to destruction, and even proposed seizing her and throwing her overboard to preserve themselves. If

their captain heard these mutterings, he did not notice them at the time, but he marked the traitor for a future day. So great, however, was his influence over the greater number from his uniform success, that notwithstanding their fears of the consequences, they continued to obey his orders, and once more bent stoutly to their oars. He encouraged them by laughing at their fears, by cheering them on, by describing the rich prize before them. As he spoke, his voice echoed along the galleries, and at length the men grew accustomed to the strange sounds and sights which had at first alarmed them. Hernan's boat took the lead, followed by the other two. Gallery after gallery was passed and counted carefully by him, but knowing the character of his followers, he did not deem it prudent to confide to any of them the secret of the method to find the spot where the treasure lay hid, and he was therefore the only person who counted the galleries. At length they drew near to the hundredth gallery, and even Hernan's heart beat quick at the expectation of becoming the possessor of so vast a store of wealth. The thought also occurred to him, that by some means or other it might after all prove deceptive.

Such are always the feelings which present themselves when some long-wished-for prize is almost within our grasp, to diminish the anticipated delight of

possession—a faltering footstep, an accident of the most trivial nature, may deprive us of it for ever.

The boats dashed on at their utmost speed, their crews even laughing at the hideous shapes which started forth from their concealment as they advanced. On they went: the eightieth gallery was passed, the ninetieth was gained;—on they went: the hundredth was reached at last. With a voice thick with anxiety, Hernan ordered his men to lay in their oars and run the boats alongside the steps, an example followed by the others. More torches were now lighted, to enable them to avoid the numerous dark pits on either side of the gallery, and Tara holding one hand, he led the way with a torch in the other. He advanced rapidly, but at the same time cautiously, for even he, much more his followers, almost expected every instant to be attacked by a legion of demons, or the spirits of the dead buccaneers, who were supposed to guard the hidden treasures collected by them in their life-time. At last, so long a time had they been searching, that Hernan began to fear that they had missed it, or that it had disappeared altogether.

"Surely we were not so long before in reaching the treasure cavern," he observed to Tara; "we must almost be at the very end of the gallery—near the fathomless pit of which you spoke."

"Your eagerness deceives you," she replied; "a few paces more and we shall gain the spot we seek. See! there is the glittering heap; possess yourselves of it, but be speedy, and let us begone, for something tells me that danger is near, though I know not its nature, nor whence it may come."

While she spoke she pointed to the entrance of a large cavern, into which the glare of the torch penetrating exhibited the eagerly-sought pile of treasure. As the pirates came up and beheld the tempting heap, they showed the most extravagant signs of joy;—some danced and sung, others rolled themselves among the scattered jewels and coin, while others loaded every part of their persons with such of the treasure as they could stow away. It was some time before Hernan could restrain them and bring them back to their senses, urged all the time to hurry on the work by Tara, who gazed with feelings of contempt and pity on what she considered the madness of his followers. He at last induced them to fill the sacks and baskets they had brought, and each man carrying as much as his strength would allow, they returned to the boats. Having emptied the precious contents into the bottom of the boats, they insisted on returning for more, although already somewhat heavily laden, and urged by Tara to retreat at once. Even Hernan, who had

been persuaded by her of the danger they ran, was disobeyed, and men hurried back with shouts and cries of joy to get more of the treasure. All their fears of demons, or the spirits of dead pirates, were forgotten —for gold alone they thought or cared. Again the cavern was reached, and every bag and basket filled; but the glittering heap seemed in no way diminished. Staggering under the weight of their loads they returned at last, and emptied the contents into the boats, when even they perceived that they could hold no more. Indeed, by the time they had taken their seats, the boats were sunk almost to their gunnels in the water. Hernan then gave the word to shove off, and pulling into the centre of the main channel, he turned the head of his boat in the direction from whence they had come. Tara, whose fears for their safety had increased, reminded him of the whirlpool into which they had before got, and which, by the turns it had caused them to make, had sent them completely through the tunnel; but he quelled her alarm, by assuring her that with light to guide them they could mark the side of the cavern, and easily keep on their right course. Their return was slower than their coming, for not only were the boats laden deeply, but the men were fatigued with their exertions. They were all in high spirits, and were laughing and joking at their former fears,

when just as they had performed about three-quarters of the distance, a loud rattling sound assailed their ears, echoing and reverberating throughout the vast cavern ;—again and again it was repeated, till it seemed as if a whole army was engaged in combat.

"It is musketry!" exclaimed Hernan. "Give way, my men--give way; depend on it the Spaniards have attacked the schooner."

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION OF BUBBLE'S ROMANCE.—THE SKIRMISH IN THE CAVERN.—DESTRUCTION OF THE CAVERN.—THE ESCAPE.—THE PIRATE'S PUNISHMENT.

THE pirates strained at their oars till the stout ash sticks almost bent double with their exertions. Still they would not heave overboard any of their precious cargo, though urged to do so by Tara; and, laden as they were, their progress was comparatively slow. However, there was no need to encourage them to exertion, for every man was eager to be engaged with the enemy in defence of the schooner, if, indeed, she was attacked. Of this they had no doubt by the time they reached the giant statue, when they beheld the bright flashes of guns illuminating the mouth of the cavern, and even heard the very clashing of the swords and the combatants—a proof that they had come to close quarters. On finding this, the eagerness of the pirates increased, and they would have shouted out in

their excitement; but Hernan warned them not to cheer, so as not to give the enemy notice of their approach. From musketry alone being heard, and the clash of steel, it was clear that the Spanish ships had not come up, but that the enemy had attacked the schooner with their boats, and Hernan recollecting the bright glare produced by the torches, felt convinced that this had attracted the attention of the Spaniards, who had thus been enabled to discover her position; probably, indeed, she was herself visible to those on board the Spanish ships while the bright light was glowing behind her. As the pirates drew near their schooner they could hear the shouts and cries of the combatants, and dashing on, they were soon alongside, and the most daring scrambled up on deck to join in the fray, while the more cautious remained to hand up the treasure they had collected at so much risk. The sound of battle and the smell of powder awakened all the fierce passions which lay slumbering in Hernan's bosom, and with his sword drawn he sprang on deck, where the enemy had just gained a footing. Tara followed him closely, not even waiting for his assistance; nor would she listen to his hurried entreaties and commands to go below to be out of danger.

"What should I be afraid of when I am near

you?" she answered. "Where you are, there will I be also."

The schooner lay with her broadside open to the mouth of the cavern, and the Spaniards had only ventured to attack her on the outer side and on the bows, which circumstance had enabled the diminished crew of the pirates to keep them at bay much longer than they would otherwise have done; indeed, such a style of fighting was not at all suited to the taste of the Dons. It was a scene of wild confusion in which Hernan found himself, lighted up occasionally by the flashes of the pistols, or as the thickly padded garments of the Spaniards caught fire from the wadding of the guns. On one side of the vessel were seen the boats of the enemy, eight or ten in number, some at a distance, disabled from the shot thrown into them; others still alongside, the crews of which were trying to get on board, and were hotly engaged in giving and receiving thrusts from long pikes with the pirates; while others, more daring, were fighting hand to hand, clinging on to the rigging or the nettings, and just within the bulwarks. Those who had got thus far discovered the weakness of the pirate crew, and were encouraging their countrymen to renew the attack with greater vigour.

Such was the state of affairs when Hernan with his

men threw himself on the deck, and though fatigued with their long pull they yet felt fresh for the combat. With loud shrieks and cries they rushed at the enemy. The tide of battle was again completely turned. The Spaniards who had gained the deck were cut down without mercy; those on the rigging, or the nettings, were hurled into the sea or cast into the boats alongside; and the boats themselves were either sunk by the heavy shot thrown into them, or driven to a distance by the hot fire which assailed them; while the loud cheers of the pirates showed them that they had little chance of success by a second attack. After firing a few ineffectual shots, they were seen by the flashes of those which the pirates returned to collect together, and to steer directly down the centre of the bay, in the direction where the ships were supposed to lay. It was extraordinary to see the effect of the flashes from the fire-arms, for every time one was discharged, the wild strange figures in the distant parts of the cavern appeared as if starting forth, and again retiring as the light died away. Hernan's first care was for Tara. She was uninjured, but alarmed at the scene she had witnessed; yet he had great difficulty in persuading her to retire to her cabin to take the rest she so much required. His next care was to secure the treasure which was now piled up in heaps on the deck.

As the pirates, who now, for the first time, saw it by the light of a torch, which made the jewels and gold sparkle brilliantly, they, as their shipmates had done before them, gave way to the most extravagant signs of joy; and when they heard that there was still more to be got from whence that came, they insisted on going to fetch it. Hernan said all he could to dissuade them; but though his orders were implicitly obeyed in times of danger or in action, on an occasion of this sort he was powerless to curb their inclinations.

"My men," he exclaimed, "you have already collected as much wealth as you can possibly know how to spend; and if you return for more, you will run into many dangers from which no bravery can save you. Follow my advice. Let us get under weigh at once, and while the Dons are in confusion and in a violent rage from the drubbing we gave them, let us slip past and put the mouth of the gulf between them and us. Once in the open sea, we can show them a clean pair of heels, and get safe off with our treasure. With that on board, we have nothing more to do with fighting if we can help it."

"We have not got enough by half," shouted several voices; "why should we leave so much bright gold to the rascally Spaniards, or to any other fellows, when we might with a little trouble go and get it? The

gold we must and will have—so, hurra, my boys! who'll man the boats to go for it?"

"Stay!" shouted Hernan, when he found the men jumping into the boats, and saw that no argument would restrain them. "By yourselves you cannot find the treasure, and would to a certainty lose your lives; and no one shall say that I, your captain, deserted you. I will go with you; but you must promise me not to overload the boats, and to hasten back as fast as possible."

"Huzza for our brave captain!" exclaimed the crew. "He is the man to lead us on all occasions. Huzza! huzza!"

Before Hernan left the schooner he entered the cabin. Tara lay on her couch wrapped in a deep slumber, occasioned by her exertions and the anxiety to which she had been subject. He gazed at her fondly.

"I will not awake you," he muttered; "you may sleep on securely in your innocence, for the great God whose laws I have outraged, but whom you have never offended, will send his guardian angels to watch over you and protect you. Farewell, beautiful one! I will return ere you awake, and you may be spared the fears my absence would cause you, did you know of it."

He kissed her smooth brow. She smiled, but did not awake; and he hurried from the cabin.

Some hours passed away before Tara awoke. A small silver lamp burnt in the cabin, and shed its pale light around. She rose, in expectation of finding Hernanpresent. He was not there. She called on his name, but he did not answer. Throwing her mantle around her she went on deck in search of him, and great was her grief and alarm when she found that he had quitted the ship without informing her of his intention, and had not returned. She at once concluded that he had gone in search of further treasure, and she anxiously endeavoured to penetrate the gloom of the cavern to discover if the boats were returning; but not a glimmering of light could be seen, and in vain did her ears listen to the sound of the oars of his boat in the water. Poor girl! no one could understand her inquiries or comprehend her fears. The officer left in command, however, had begun to be rather anxious for Hernan's return, as he thought that it was now high time that they should be getting under weigh, if they were to endeavour to give the Spaniards the slip before the night was over. Yet, as he was not a man given to loquacity, and as he knew that by talking about it he would not come more speedily, he continued his silent and solitary walk on the quarter-deck.

A few other men were following his example; while the remainder of the watch on deck were keeping a bright look-out from their stations in different parts of the ship. The rest of the crew were below, snatching a short repose, with their arms by their sides, to be ready to repel another attack. Tara had perfect faith in Hernan, for love cannot exist without it; but she felt that it would have been more considerate of him to have told her if he must go, and much wiser in him to have quitted without delay so dangerous a locality. As she valued little the treasure which had tempted the pirates to run so great a risk, so did she think lightly of the temptation which had induced them to go. With hurried steps, and a heart sinking with apprehension, she continued to pace the deck; for though weary in body and mind, she could not return to the cabin, the air of which appeared to her hot and suffocating. The time wore on, and the expedition did not return. Even the men at length began to be alarmed; but their fears were more for themselves, lest the Spaniards should come upon them and destroy them while they were thus short-handed, and they should lose all the treasure they had collected. Still the boats did not return. Although, looking towards the interior of the cavern, all appeared of darkest gloom, yet, seaward, a faint light streak already ushered in

the dawn. With increased fears Tara beheld it grow broader and brighter, knowing that in a short time the schooner would be full in view of their overpowering enemy.

Gradually the shades of night withdrew, and the silvery light of the early morn came on, while the streak in the east widened and assumed a yellow, then an orange, and lastly a ruddy hue, while the three Spanish ships were seen emerging from the darkness, their masts and spars, and the tracery of their rigging becoming well defined and marked against the clear sky.

When they found themselves in this dangerous position, the pirates were undecided what to do. Some proposed leaving their comrades to their fate, and endeavour to run past the Spaniards even in daylight, which, should there spring up a breeze in their easily-worked vessel they might possibly accomplish; others were for remaining where they were; some thought of escaping with their booty to the shore; and the rest were for running the schooner further up the cavern and defying the pursuit of the enemy. The opinion of the second named party prevailed, and it was determined to make everything ready for action, to get a spring on their cable, and to wait the return of the boats where they were. Tara watched these pre-

parations with intense interest. The movements of the crew were quickened by their observing the top-sails of the Spanish ships let fall, and their anchors run up to the bows. Sail after sail was then set on them, till they presented wide fields of white canvas spread out against the ruddy sky, though as yet the sails hung uselessly against the masts.

The Spaniards, however, probably observed the coming breeze in the distance, though it was hid from the eyes of the pirates. At last the lighter sails were seen to bulge out, the others soon became also filled with the wind, and the vast fabrics glided forward. On they came, in their glory and their pride, like three mighty giants, to perform their work of destruction. Even the sturdy pirates saw them approach with dismay, for with their enfeebled crew they could not hope successfully to contend with them; but still, encouraged by their officers, they went about their duties with alacrity and steady silence, which proved their determination. Tara gazed with increased anxiety up the cavern—but no boats or lights were to be seen—when she fancied that she could hear the fall of oars in the water. She listened with still greater attention, and was certain that she was not mistaken.

"They come, they come!" she exclaimed, pointing eagerly up the cavern with an expression of joy.

The pirates did not understand her language, but conjectured, by her gestures, that she fancied the boats were returning. As she spoke, a yellow hue began to pervade the cavern, the upper extremities of the vast stalactites becoming tinged apparently with gold. Gradually the aureate tints extended throughout each stalactite, one catching the reflection of the other, till the whole roof, lately a dark arch, became like a canopy of burnished gold. Towards the ocean, the sun was seen just rising above the calm waters, and as he seemed to float for an instant on its bosom before he began his upward course, his rays penetrated into the inmost recesses of the cavern, and it was then, in that glorious blaze of light, that the boats were perceived rapidly approaching the schooner. On they came, as fast as their crews could bend their backs to the oars. At the same time the Spanish ships, which had been gradually nearing the mouth of the cavern, were seen to take in their lighter sails, and to make preparations for rounding to, so as to bring their broadsides to bear upon the schooner. Tara's heart bounded with joy as she once more beheld Hernan returning in safety. She thought not, and cared not, for the danger to which they were exposed, for it was to be shared with him she loved.

Nearer and nearer the ships approached, till it was

doubtful whether the boats could get alongside the schooner before they would open their fire. The pirates cheered lustily as they saw their comrades drawing close to them. It seemed as a signal for the ships to commence their work of destruction; for scarcely had the sound of human voices died away among the recesses of the cavern than the loud roaring report of a cannon was heard, followed by others in rapid succession, which echoed in loud thunders from rock to rock, till the din became almost deafening, and its sound was as if two mighty fleets were engaged in battle. The pirates, in return, commenced firing; but the ships were at too great a distance from the schooner for their shot to tell with any effect. On seeing this, the Spaniards again kept away and stood on towards the cavern. They had been deceived in the distance by the well-defined outline of the schooner, as her dark hull appeared amid the blaze of light which surrounded her. Tara saw not what was going forward. She heard not the noise, and saw not the shot as they bounded into the cavern, for her whole being was concentrated on the rapidly approaching boats. A few more strokes, and they will be on board. "Huzza, huzza, huzza!" again the men cheered. The boats ran alongside, and the first who sprang on deck was Hernan. With a cry of joy, Tara threw herself into

his arms. He returned her caress affectionately; and then, disengaging himself, he gave orders to get the schooner under weigh. There was by that time a light air blowing directly up the mouth of the cavern.

"This is no place for us to remain in," he exclaimed; "the enemy will blow us completely out of the water if we stay where we are. When we get sail on the vessel, we must retreat up the cavern, where, if they follow, they must take the consequences."

While sail was being made on the schooner and the anchor hove up, some of the men were engaged in unloading the boats, which were fuller than ever of treasure. The schooner had just got under weigh, when the three ships again hauled up, and let fly their broadsides directly into the cavern, the shot falling into the calm water near her, or rattling and bounding against the rocks, but without striking her.

"Now," shouted Hernan to his men, as the schooner's broadside was still turned to the ships, "fire, my men, and remember that none of your shot miss."

The crew obeyed; and their fire seemed to have some effect, for several of the enemy's spars were seen to tumble down on deck. This evidently enraged them, for they immediately again filled their sails and stood on, to be closer in to the mouth of the cavern. The schooner, instead of waiting to receive them, also

kept away, and under Hernan's guidance ran directly up the centre of the cavern. Tara still hung on Hernan's arm.

"Fear not," he said; "we can run the vessel up one of the numerous galleries at hand if we are hard pressed, and the enemy will never find us."

As the schooner led, the ships followed so eagerly in the pursuit, that, before they were aware of it, they got completely under the arch of the cavern, holding, indeed, the same position that the schooner had during the night. Finding that it was too late to retreat—for, as the wind was blowing directly into the cavern they could not work out again—and as they were afraid of proceeding further, they let go their anchors and furled their sails, probably intending to destroy the pirates before they attempted to tow out the ships—the only means by which they could hope to retrace their path. Thus, at all events, all hope of escape in that direction was cut off, and no one but Hernan and Tara yet knew of the passage under the isthmus. The pirate crew beheld these arrangements with no little apprehension, for even the dullest saw that if the vessel was not sunk, they should probably be starved out, as two of the enemy's ships could keep guard while the other went in search of provisions. Here they appeared, then, to be caught in a trap. Hernan,

however, calmed their alarm, and promised them the victory.

"To show them that we despise them, we will this time be the first to commence the action," he exclaimed. "Fire, my men; fire steadily, and low."

Scarcely had he spoken, when several shots were seen to take effect on the hulls of the enemy's ships, the white splinters glancing off in every direction. This increased the rage of the Spaniards, who, bringing their broadsides to bear on the schooner, discharged their whole batteries at her. Just then the shield of the Spirit of the Storm sent forth a ray of dazzling splendour.

"Alas!" exclaimed Tara, "this bloody strife is a profanation of the temple of the divinity, and he will not fail to avenge himself on our heads."

She spoke as the thunder of the enemy's guns was heard, and the shot came rattling about the ship, and tearing off huge pieces of stalactite from the sides of the cavern.

The light which had before pervaded the cavern was far brighter than that of the open air, and now the whole interior became as it had appeared when Hernan and Tara first visited it, filled with an atmosphere of a bright golden hue, dazzling to the sight, so that objects were less clearly distinguishable than when the light

was less intense. This circumstance probably prevented the Spaniards from taking so good an aim as they would otherwise have done. The action now began in earnest. The Spaniards continued firing as rapidly as they could load, their shot flying in all directions, and reaching often into the far recesses of the cavern; some even struck the gigantic idol, but without making much impression; but few inflicted any serious injury on the schooner. Now and then one would come tearing across her decks, or wounding her spars and rigging, and several men were struck down, and sent to their last account; but this only increased the rage of the survivors, who worked their guns with still greater alacrity, careless of the shot and the spars and blocks which came tumbling down on their heads. A still greater danger, indeed, threatened them, from the masses of stalactite which, either struck off by the cannon-balls or shaken by the concussion, fell from the roof in all directions, appearing like meteors in their rapid descent into the water. Fortunately, none fell actually on to the deck of the schooner, or she might have been sent to the bottom.

The schooner lay with her fore-top-sail to the mast, ready to move in any direction which might be considered necessary, while the ships had their anchors down to prevent their drifting further in, and were

thus unable, on any sudden emergency, to shift their position. The smoke also from the guns rose in dense masses, and, spreading throughout the cavern, gradually obscured the atmosphere; and so thick did it become, that it was only as the light breeze, which still came in from the ocean, cleared it away, that the combatants could at length see each other.

Hernan had again entreated Tara to go below, but no argument or prayers could induce her to quit his side; yet even her courage nearly gave way, as the terrific din, and the scene of havoc, destruction, and carnage increased.

Wherever he went she followed, as he flew from gun to gun to encourage his men, and to see that they aimed with precision.

"Oh, let us fly while there is yet time," she exclaimed; "depend on it, the outraged deity of the cavern will avenge himself on our heads, and we and the enemy shall be overwhelmed in a universal ruin. We may escape in the boats up the cavern, where the Spaniards will not dare to follow us, or, if they do, we may lay concealed in one of the many caverns, while they in vain search for us. If you would save our lives and that of the crew, do not neglect my advice."

"I would, for your sake, my Tara, do all you

desire," answered Hernan; "but we pirates are sworn not to desert our ship while she remains afloat; and even now we are a match for the enemy, and injure them more than they hurt us. If they do not attempt again to attack us in their boats, which I do not think they will, we may even now gain the victory, and be able to sail out of the cavern in spite of those proud ships which now block up the entrance."

"I wish that I had hopes that we might so escape!" she replied; "but ah, see! the very roof of the cavern seems to tremble, and the Spirit of the Tempest shakes his head in anger—see! see!"

As she spoke she pointed upwards, and her voice could no longer be heard amid the loud roaring of the guns repeated by a thousand echoes, the shrieks and the shouts of the men, and the rattling of the falling stalactites. To add to the horrors of the scene, a dark shadow was seen descending from the roof and gradually filling the cavern, the obscurity being increased by the clouds of smoke from the guns of the combatants. Although these phenomena must have alarmed the Spaniards, they still perseveringly fought their ships. For a short time their fire slackened; but they were concentrating their strength for a greater effort; and having allowed the smoke to blow off, and loaded all their guns, at a given signal the three ships discharged

them at once in the hopes of sinking the schooner. Louder than ever and more terrific was the roar, as the shot came flying over and about the pirate ship, piercing her hull and killing and wounding many of her people. She reeled with the shock, and Hernan felt that another such discharge would prove his last. But far more fatal to the Spaniards was the effect of these broadsides, for the vast arch of the cavern, previously shaken by the concussion, now trembled violently, as if upheaved by an earthquake; rock after rock gave way, and further loosened the remainder. The crews of the Spanish ships beheld with despair their coming fate, from which they had no human means of escape. "To the boats! to the boats!" was the horror-stricken cry. The guns were deserted, and the men rushed to lower their boats in the attempt to escape; but it was too late. Down came the ponderous mass with a crash which surpassed the roar of the artillery in loudness. In an instant the hapless ships were overwhelmed, crushed, and driven down bodily beneath the water, as if they had been mere withered leaves floating on its surface—not a human being of all those who lately peopled their decks escaped. Still the rocks and huge masses of earth continued to rush down, blackening the air in their fall, and blocking up the entrance. Rapidly as words can utter it, a reef of rocks rose above the

water, and the ruin still proceeding, a complete wall was formed, which blocked up the magic cavern from the light of day or the further ingress of man. Such was the summary manner in which the Spirit of the Tempest avenged himself on the heads of those who, without making a propitiatory offering, had audaciously ventured within the precincts of his temple.

But what had become of the pirate-schooner while this tremendous event was taking place? Was destruction also to overtake her?

When Hernan perceived that the enemy had ceased firing, he, guessing the reason, saw that the best way to escape from the iron shower from which his vessel had already suffered so severely, was to run further up the cavern; and, accordingly, there being still light sufficient for him to steer by, he ordered the helm to be put up, and filling the topsail, he boldly kept up the cavern. Before the final catastrophe occurred the schooner had run some way up, and as by the lead the water was found of great depth, he had hopes of effectually evading the enemy. At last the broadsides of the enemy sent forth their dying showers; but as the schooner presented but a small mark, few of the shots hit her, and though some of her men were killed, her hull was uninjured. The echoes of the discharge, followed by those of the crash of the falling arch, filled

the cavern with a deafening din, more frightful than any which had before been heard. The water rose in wild waves, and almost dashed the schooner against the sides; and as the noise continued, the atmosphere became close and oppressive, and a thick darkness filled the cavern. Hernan saw it coming on, and had torches lighted in time, or nothing could have preserved the schooner from destruction. For some time the schooner continued rocking to and fro; and had she not, by the skilful guidance of Hernan, been kept in the centre of the channel, where the wind rushing through the upper part of the cavern, which still remained open, enabled him to hold steerage way on her, she must, even there, have been lost. His men, indeed, as it was, gave way to despair when they saw the entrance of the cavern blocked up, and fully believed that they were consigned to a lingering death within this mighty sepulchre.

Hitherto they had been in all respects obedient; but now, seeing, as they thought, a fearful fate staring them in the face, some went below, intending to break into the spirit-room, and others came tumultuously aft, where Hernan, with Tara by his side, was standing near the helm, and with fearful imprecations accused him of carelessly leading them to destruction.

"Why did you tempt us to come here after the

devil's gold?" they exclaimed. "By this time the chances are, it is turned into copper, and the jewels into sand. Now you have got us into this precious trap, can you, or that little Indian witch there, help us out again?"

Some spoke, while the rest used threatening gestures, and those who held the torches waved them wildly around, the red glare falling on the glittering sides and roof of the lofty cavern, on the sails of the vessel, and along the surface of the agitated water; while it gave to their own enraged and terror-stricken countenances an almost demoniacal expression. Hernan regarded them for a minute with proud contempt, while his heart swelled with indignation.

"Cowards!" he exclaimed—"and I am sorry to call men who have often fought so bravely by that name—you accuse me of thoughtlessly leading you to destruction, and of mocking you with false treasure by the aid of witchcraft. Now, I answer you, without me you would have long since been in the power of your enemies; and had I chosen it, I might have made the rich store of wealth with which our vessel is laden my own, without inviting you to share it; but I adhered to our laws, and you seem inclined to break them. However, I pardon you. Return to your duty; and as I have hitherto led you on all occasions to success,

I now promise you that, if you obey my orders, I will carry you safely out of this difficulty."

This dauntless and confident speech completely curbed the fierce passions of the pirates, and calmed their fears, though many looked up with a longing glance at the small speck of blue sky which was seen through the remaining opening of the cavern, in the intervals between each fresh avalanche of rocks which came rushing down to fill it up.

"To your stations, my men, and we will make more sail on the schooner," continued their captain; and the crew obeyed his orders, although it appeared to them that the vessel was rushing on into eternal night, or rather into the very bowels of the earth. As they proceeded the waves gradually subsided, and the schooner held her tranquil course along the immense cavern. Had it not been, however, for the reflective power of the stalactites, which threw the lights always a considerable distance ahead, they could not have been able to see their way. The wind still blew along the cavern in their favour, and a current also ran in the same direction, so that their progress was rapid indeed; had there been any sunken rocks in the way they could scarcely have avoided striking on them. When they got to the mouth of the cave containing the remainder of the treasure, avarice getting the

better of the fears of some of the men, they wished to bring the vessel to an anchor while they could get it on board; but to this Hernan would not consent, assuring them that the danger was great, and that they had already more wealth than any of them would know what to do with. As the discussion was going forward they ran past the gallery, when the more sensible of the crew siding with the captain, the rest were silenced. The schooner soon afterwards came before the entrance of the artificial tunnel, and great was the surprise of all, except Hernan and Tara, when they found themselves beneath its solid roof of masonry. The water was here much shallower, in consequence probably of the masses of rock which gave way as the workmen broke into the Temple of the Sun, and which the current had not yet carried off; but the schooner fortunately glided through them unhurt, and continued her subterranean course. Hour after hour passed away, and the crew stood at their stations mute with astonishment and admiration at their captain's knowledge, for he wisely had not informed them of where they were going, and little did any of them suppose that they were sailing directly under the isthmus. Their progress was, of course, much slower than had been that of the canoe on Hernan's first voyage; and after some time the breeze

died completely away, and they were compelled to tow the schooner along. Thus, not only the whole day, but the whole night was consumed before they reached the outlet. So easily, indeed, did they proceed, that one watch went to their berths below as if they had been in the open sea. It was soon after the period when, by their timepieces, it should have been morning, that the look-out forward exclaimed that he saw the light of day in the far distance, and the people eagerly crowded forward to behold what they never expected again to see. Continuing on some time further, Hernan ordered the torches to be extinguished, and to the joy of all, bright daylight burst upon their sight.

They were just then emerging from the tunnel into the Devil's Cave. The pirates cheered loudly, and the crews of the boats towing ahead pulled lustily as they once more glided over the heaving water of the ocean, though they were still under the black arch of the cavern. Still greater was their joy as they cleared it altogether; and a light air from the north filling their sails, the boats were called alongside, and they found themselves once more beneath the blue canopy of heaven. They now clustered round their chief, and by every means in their power expressed their satisfaction and gratitude.

"Huzza, for our noble captain!" they shouted; "huzza for the leader who has filled our pockets with gold! Huzza, huzza!"

The breeze freshened; every inch of sail the vessel could carry was set, and onward she bounded, boldly and free, over the bosom of the wide ocean.

The 'Serpent' held her course towards the southern points of America's mighty continent. The crew were not a little disappointed when they found that they had a long voyage before them round Cape Horn, instead of the short passage across the Atlantic; but Hernan reconciled them to the delay by reminding them that they should have had to run the gauntlet through a number of vessels which were on the look-out for them, whereas that now they should be able to reach Europe without molestation, and might land their wealth at some quiet port without much risk of suspicion. The 'Serpent' had the damages she had received in the action with the Spaniards speedily repaired at an uninhabited island in the Pacific, which Hernan had selected from there being there no temptation to induce his men to spend their wealth, which, with the thoughtlessness of seamen, they would most certainly have done had they enjoyed the opportunity. On sailed the pirate-ship, the richest argosie which was floating on the bosom of the deep.

But was the chief owner of that wealth happy? He thought himself so. He possessed everything in anticipation which man could wish for; gold in abundance, health, and strength, an appearance which all must admire, and, more than all, a bride whom he devotedly loved. Day after day that love had increased; day after day her beauty seemed more refined and perfect; and, as her mind expanded under his persevering efforts to teach her the language, and the lore—and, strange as it may seem, the religion, too, of England—new beauties were every day developed. She was, in truth, the sunny spot in his existence. When his eyes were fixed on her he thought not of his former crimes; conscience slumbered, and he was at peace. Since he had known her he had ceased from committing fresh crimes, and he fancied himself a reformed man.

Tara was all life and animation—a new existence was opening to the comprehension of the Indian girl. For the first time she learnt the extent of the globe, the history of mankind, the various races of the human species, the varieties of the animal kingdom, the phenomena of nature; her mind was filled with wonder and delight; words could not express her pleasure, all was so new and beautiful. Thus did the once fierce pirate pass his time. No longer were the wealthy settlements they passed examined to discover whether

they might venture on an attack, and the merchant-ships of all nations were allowed to sail by unmolested, Hernan's only public care being to guide the ship by the most direct course, and to keep the crew from quarrelling among themselves.

The 'Serpent' had passed the western coast of America, and was attempting to double that stormy point, Cape Horn, when, being driven far to the south, she became entangled among lofty icebergs, which threatened her with destruction. A fierce gale also arose, with sleet, and snow, and cold, which continued for many days, when the presence of Hernan was required constantly on deck to preserve the ship from destruction. Thither Tara invariably accompanied him, fearless of all danger, to behold those floating islands of snow so new to her sight, and to watch the lofty waves, the forked lightning, and the fast-driving clouds. She, the child of a genial clime, was then exposed to cold her frame was unprepared to bear.

The storm abated, the ship was uninjured, and once more proceeded gaily on her course. Again they entered a warmer clime; but a change was taking place in Tara though Hernan did not perceive it. Her spirits became uncertain, though at times higher than ever; her cheek grew thinner and paler, though

at times the colour came in a clear spot which mocked the hue of health; yet her bright eyes were brighter than before, and beamed with a love as deep as ever on Hernan. At length, too, her strength failed, and she could no longer attend to the studies in which Hernan delighted to instruct her. Still the sad truth had not broken on his mind. The blow was to come with more awful and sudden effect.

It was a beautiful evening; a soft air from the south wafted the ship gently over the glassy deep. The sun was setting in splendour over Tara's distant land, as she lay propped up with cushions on the deck, where she had expressed a wish to be carried to enjoy the pure atmosphere of Heaven. Hernan knelt by her side, his hand in hers.

"The crisis of your illness has passed, my love," he said; "you will soon recover; and by the time we reach the shores of England you will be able to enjoy the homage, and luxury, and the delight which rank and wealth can secure for us. A short time only is to be passed, and all we wish for can be ours."

"Hernan," she whispered, "I must not mock you with vain hopes;—a warning I cannot doubt tells me they are vain. Could aught retain my spirit on earth, it would have been my love for you; but an irresistible power calls me hither. Still will I return

and hover o'er you. The thought that I must quit you kills me. Hernan, my own—I die."

The stern pirates wept when they found that that beautiful creature was dead. They bore their captain senseless to his cabin; and he spoke not to any one till the 'Serpent' was off a British port. Then his oath and his duty to his men called him into action.

The pirate's treasure was safely landed. His share bought him lands and titles, and again he assumed the name he once had borne, but nought brought back joy to his heart; for his bride, the only being he had ever loved, slept in her ocean grave

CHAPTER X.

SLEET'S STORY—HOW JOE BUNTIN DID THE REVENUE.

THE party on board the yacht showed their estimation of Bubble's story rather more by their silence, than by the loudness of their applause. What might have been the effect on his audience, I don't know, but anything like an expression of sentiment was put to flight by a young midshipman giving a deep sigh, so deep, that it was heard fore and aft. This tickled the fancy of a more mercurial shipmate, who replied to it by a loud laugh. The impulse was very catching; and every one of us was soon laughing, and giggling away as if one of the funniest of jokes had just been uttered.

Bubble took the matter very good naturedly, laughing as much as any one of us. Old Buntin, I suspect, was the only one who was rather bored by the story. He had not a bit of romance or sentiment

in the whole of his composition. Though a right honest good seamen as ever stepped.

"Now don't you think, Mr. Hearty, that you could find some one who can spin a regular sea matter of fact yarn about things which really have been?"

The owner of the 'Frolic' thought a little: "Yes, by-the-by, I have it," he exclaimed, "one of the men I have on board is a first-rate yarn-spinner. Once set his tongue a going it is difficult to stop it, and yet there is very little romance about the old man. He has, I conclude, a first-rate memory, and just tells what he has seen and heard. I'll call him aft, and will try what we can get out of him."

Hearty on this went forward, and after a little confab with the crew, returned with old Sleet, who, instead of being bashful, was looking as pleased as Punch in his most frolicsome humour, at the honour about to be done him. Without hesitation he doffed his hat, threw his quid overboard, smoothed down his hair, and began his tale. I must confess that I have not given it in his language, which was somewhat a departure from the orthodox vernacular, and might weary my readers.

"Now, gentlemen and ladies all, I'm going to tell you

'HOW JOE BUNTIN DID THE REVENUE.

The 'Pretty Polly' was the fastest, the smartest, and the sweetest craft that sailed out of Fairport; so said Joe Buntin, and nobody had better right to say it, or better reason to know it, he being part owner of her, and having been master of her from the day her keel first touched the water. She was a cutter of no great size, for she measured only something between thirty and forty tons; she had great beam for her length, was sharp in the bows, rising slightly forward, and with a clean run; she was, in fact, a capital sea-boat, fit to go round the world if needs be—weatherly in a heavy sea and very fast in smooth water, though the nautical critics pronounced her counter too short for beauty; but Joe did not consider that point a defect, as it made her all the better for running in foul weather, which was what he very frequently wanted her to do. She carried a whacking big mainsail with immense hoist in it, and the boom well over the taffrail. Her big jib was a whopper with a vengeance, and her foresail hoisted chock up to the block. She had a swinging gaff-topsail, very broad in the head, and a square-sail to set for running, with prodigious spread in it; so that give the 'Pretty Polly' a good breeze, few were the

craft of anything like her own size she couldn't walk away from. In fact, anybody might have taken her for some dandified yacht rather than for a humble pilot-boat, which the number on her mainsail proclaimed her to be. Now the 'Pretty Polly,' like other beauties, had her fair weather and her foul weather looks, her winter as well as her summer suit. She had her second, and third, and storm-jibs, a trysail of heavy canvas, and even a second mainsail, with a shorter boom to ship at times, while her standing and running rigging was as good as the best hemp and the greatest care could keep it, for every inch of it was turned in under Joe's inspection if not with his own hand. Joe Buntin loved his craft, as does every good sailor; she was his care, his pride, his delight, mistress, wife, and friend. He would talk to her and talk of her by the hour together; he was never tired of praising her, of expatiating on her qualities, of boasting of her achievements, how she walked away from such a cutter,—how she weathered such a gale,—how she clawed off a lee-shore on such an occasion; there was no end to what she had done and was to do. She was, in truth, all in all to Joe; he was worthy of her and she was worthy of him, which reminds us that he himself claims a word or two of description. He had little beauty, nor did he boast of it, for in figure he

was nearly as broad as high, with a short, thick neck, and a turn-up nose in the centre of his round, fresh-coloured visage; but he had black, sparkling eyes, full of fun and humour, and a well-formed mouth with strong white teeth, which rescued his countenance from being ugly, while an expression of firmness and boldness, with great good nature, made him respected by all, and gained him plenty of friends. Joe sported a love-lock on each side of his face, with a little tarpaulin hat stuck on the top of his head, a neat blue jacket, or a simple blue Guernsey frock, and an enormously large pair of Flushing trousers, with low shoes; indeed, he was very natty in his dress, and although many people called him a smuggler—nor is there any use in denying that he was one—he did not look a bit like those cut-throat characters represented on the stage or in print-shops, with high boots, and red caps, and cloaks, and pistols, and hangers. Indeed, so far from there being anything of the ruffian about him, he looked and considered himself a very honest fellow. He cheated nobody, for though he broke the revenue laws systematically and regularly, he had, perhaps, persuaded himself, by a course of reasoning not at all peculiar to himself, that there was no harm in so doing; possibly, he had an idea that those laws were bad laws, and injurious

to the country; so out of the evil, as he could not remedy it, he determined to pluck that rosebud—profit—to his own pocket. Remember that we are not at all certain that he actually did reason as we have suggested; we are, we confess, rather inclined to suspect that he found the occupation profitable; that he had been engaged in it from his earliest days, and therefore followed it without further troubling his head about its lawfulness or unlawfulness. So much for Joe Buntin and his cutter the 'Pretty Polly.'

His crew were a bold set of fellows, staunch to him and true to each other; indeed, most of them, as is usual, had a share in the vessel, and all were interested in the success of her undertakings; they were quiet, peaceable, and orderly men; their rule was never to fight, the times were too tranquil for such work, and a running noose before their eyes was not a pleasant prospect. They trusted entirely to their wit and their heels for success, and provided one cargo in three could be safely landed, they calculated on making a remunerating profit.

The days when armed smuggling craft, with a hundred hands on board bid defiance to royal cruisers, had long passed by, for we are referring to a period within the last six or eight years only, during the

last days of smuggling. Now the contraband trade is chiefly carried on in small open boats, or fishing craft, affording a very precarious subsistence to those who still engage in it. After what has been said it may be confessed that the 'Pretty Polly' was chiefly employed in smuggling, though her ostensible, and, indeed, very frequent occupation was that of a pilot-vessel.

Now we must own that in those days we did not feel a proper and correct hatred of smugglers and their doings; the dangers they experienced, the daring and talent they displayed in their calling, used, in spite of our better reason, to attract our admiration, and to raise them to the dignity of petty heroes in our imagination. The dishonest merchant, the dealer in contraband goods, the encourager of crime, was the man who received the full measure of our contempt and dislike—he who, skulking quietly on shore, without fear or danger, reaped the profits of the bold seaman's toils.

Fairport, to which the 'Pretty Polly' belonged, is a neat little town at the mouth of a small river on the southern coast of England. The entrance to the harbour is guarded by an old castle, with a few cannon on the top of it, and was garrisoned by a superannuated gunner, his old wife and his pretty

grand-daughter, who performed most efficiently all the duties in the fortress, such as sweeping it clean, mopping out the guns, and shutting the gates at night. Serjeant Ramrod was a good specimen of a fine old soldier, and certainly when seeing his portly figure and upright carriage, and listening to his conversation, one might suppose that he held a higher rank than it had ever been his fate to reach. He had seen much service, been engaged in numerous expeditions in various parts of the world, and went through the whole of the Peninsular war; indeed, had merit its due reward, he should, he assured his friends, be a general instead of a serjeant, and so being rather an admirer of his, we are also apt to think—but then when has merit its due reward? What an extraordinary hoisting up and hauling down there would be to give every man his due! Serjeant Ramrod always went by the name of the Governor of Fairport Castle, and we suspect rather liked the title. He was, in truth, much better off than the governors of half the castles in the world, though he did not think so himself; he had no troops, certainly, to marshal or drill, but then he had no rounds to make or complaints to hear, and his little garrison, composed of his wife and grandchild, never gave him a moment's uneasiness, while he might consider himself

almost an independent ruler, so few and far between were the visits of his superior officers.

The town of Fairport consists of a long street, with a few offshoots, containing some sixty houses or so, inhabited by pilots, fishermen, and other seafaring characters, two or three half-pay naval officers, a few casual visitors in the summer months, a medical man or two, and a proportionate number of shopkeepers. The castle stands at one end of the town close to the mouth of the river, the tide of which sweeps round under its walls, where there is always water sufficient to float a boat even at low tide. In the walls of the castle are a few loopholes and a small postern-gate or port to hoist in stores, and close to it is a quay, the chief landing-place of the town. Here a revenue officer is stationed night and day to prevent smuggling, though there are certain angles of the castle wall which he cannot overlook from his post. This description we must beg our readers to remember.

One fine morning, soon after daybreak in the early part of the year, Joe Buntin and his crew appeared on Fairport quay with their pea-jackets and bundles under their arms, and jumping into their boat pulled on board the 'Pretty Polly.' Her sails were loosened and hoisted in a trice, the breeze took her foresail, the mainsail next filled, the jib-sheet was flattened aft,

and slipping from her moorings she slowly glided towards the mouth of the river. The jib-sheet was, however, immediately after let go, the helm was put down, and about she came—in half a minute more, so narrow is the channel, that she was again about, and at least six tacks had she to make before she could weather the westernmost spit at the entrance of the harbour, and stand clear out to sea.

"I wonder which of the French ports she's bound to now," observed a coast-guard man to a companion who had just joined him on the little quay close to the castle. "After some of her old tricks, I warrant."

"We shall have to keep a sharp look out after him, or he'll double on us, you may depend on it," replied the other; "Joe Buntin's a difficult chap to circumvent, and one needs to be up early in the morning to find him snoozing."

"More reason we shouldn't go to sleep ourselves, Ben," said the first speaker; "I must report the sailing of the 'Pretty Polly' to the inspecting commander that he may send along the coast to give notice that she's out. Captain Sturney would give not a little to catch the 'Pretty Polly,' and he's told Joe that he'll nab her some day."

"What did Joe say to that?"

"Oh, he laughed and tried to look innocent, and answered that he was welcome to her if he ever found her with a tub of spirits, or a bale of tobacco in her."

"I'll tell you, though, who'd give his right hand and something more, to boot, to catch Master Joe himself, or I'm very much mistaken."

"Who's that?"

"Why, Lieutenant Hogson, to be sure. You see he has set his eyes on little Margaret Ramrod, the old gunner's grandchild, but she don't like him, though he is a naval officer, and won't have anything to say to him, and he has found out that Joe is sweet in that quarter, and suspects that if it weren't for him, he himself should have more favour. Now, if he could get Joe out of the way, the game would be in his own hands."

"Oh, that's it, is it? Well, I think the little girl is right, for Joe is a good fellow, though he does smuggle a bit, and as for Lieutenant Hogson, though he is our officer, the less we say about him the better."

While this conversation was going on, the 'Pretty Polly' had reached down abreast of the quay, when Buntin, who was at the helm, waved his hand to the coast-guard men, they in return wishing him a pleasant voyage and a safe return.

"Thank ye," answered Joe, laughing, for he and his opponents were on excellent terms. "Thank ye, and remember, keep a bright look out for me."

The cutter then passed so close to the castle, that her boom almost grazed its time-worn walls. Joe looked up at the battlements, and there he saw a bright young face, with a pair of sparkling eyes, gazing down upon him. Joe took off his tarpaulin hat and waved it.

"I'll not forget your commission, Miss Margaret. My respects to your grandfather," he sang out.

There was not time to say more before the cutter shot out of hearing. The flutter of a handkerchief was the answer, and as long as a human figure was visible on the ramparts, Joe saw that Mistress Margaret was watching him. Now, it must be owned, that it was only of late Joe had yielded to the tender passion, and it would have puzzled him to say how it was. He had been accustomed to bring over trifling presents to the little girl, and had ingratiated himself with the old soldier, by the gift now and then of a few bottles of real cognac; but he scarcely suspected that his 'Pretty Polly,' his fast-sailing craft, had any rival in his affections.

The day after the 'Pretty Polly,' sailed, Margaret was seated at her work, and the old dame sat spinning

in their little parlour in the castle, while Mr. Ramrod was taking his usual walk on the quay, when a loud tap was heard at the door.

"Come in," said the dame, and Lieutenant Hogson made his appearance.

Now, although by no means a favourite guest, he was, from his rank and office, always welcomed politely, and Margaret jumped up and wiped a chair, while the dame begged him to be seated. His appearance was not prepossessing, for his face was pock-marked, his hair was coarse and scanty, and sundry potations deep and strong had added a ruddy hue to the tip of his nose, while his figure was broad and ungainly. He threw himself into a chair, as if he felt himself perfectly at home. "Ah, pretty Margaret! bright and smiling as ever, I see. How I envy your happy disposition," he began.

"Yes, sir, I'm fond of laughing," said Margaret, demurely.

"So I see. And how's grandfather?"

"Here he comes to answer for himself, sir," said Margaret, as old Ramrod appeared, and, welcoming his guest, placed a bottle and some glasses before him, while Margaret brought a jug of hot water and some sugar. The eyes of the lieutenant twinkled as he saw the preparations.

"Not much duty paid on this, I suspect, Mr. Ramrod," he observed, as he smacked his lips after the first mouthful.

"Can't say, sir. They say that the revenue does not benefit from any that's drunk in Fairport."

"A gift of our friend Buntin's, probably," hazarded the officer.

"Can't say, sir; several of my friends make me a little present now and then. I put no mark on them."

"Oh, all right, I don't ask questions," said the lieutenant. "By-the-by, I find that the 'Pretty Polly' has started on another trip."

"So I hear, sir," said Ramrod.

"Can you guess where's she's gone, Miss Margaret?" asked the officer.

"Piloting, I suppose, sir," answered the maiden, blushing.

"Oh, ay, yes, of course; but didn't he talk of going anywhere on the French coast?"

"Yes, sir," answered Margaret, "he said he thought he might just look in at Cherbourg."

"And how soon did he say he would be back?" asked the officer.

"In four or five days, sir," said Margaret.

The lieutenant was delighted with the success of his interrogations, and at finding the maiden in so com-

municative a mood; so mixing a stiffer tumbler of grog than before to heighten his own wits, he continued, "Now, my good girl, I don't ask you to tell me any thing to injure our friend Buntin, but did he chance to let drop before you where he proposed to make his land-fall on his return—you understand, where he intended to touch first before he brings the 'Pretty Polly' into Fairport?"

"Dear me, I did hear him talk of looking into —— Bay; and he told Denman, and Jones, and Tigtop, and several others, to be down there," answered Margaret, with the greatest simplicity.

"I don't think the girl knows what she's talking of, Mr. Hogson," interposed old Ramrod, endeavouring to silence his grand-daughter. "But of course anything she has let drop, you won't make use of, sir."

"Oh, dear, no! of course not, my good friend," answered Mr. Hogson. "I merely asked for curiosity's sake. But I must wish you good afternoon. I have my duties to attend to—duty before pleasure, you know, Mr. Ramrod. Good-bye, Miss Margaret, my ocean lily—a good afternoon to you, old hero of a hundred fights;" and, gulping down the contents of his tumbler, with no very steady steps the officer took his leave.

As soon as he was gone, Ramrod scolded his grand-

child for her imprudence in speaking of Buntin's affairs.

"You don't know the injury you may have done him," he added; "but it never does to trust a female with what you don't want known."

"Perhaps not, grandfather," said Margaret, smiling archly. "But Joe told me that I might just let it fall, if I had an opportunity, that he was going to run a crop at —— Bay, and I could not resist the temptation, when Mr. Hogson asked me, thinking I was so simple all the time. I'm sure, however, I wish that Joe would give over smuggling altogether. It's very wrong, I tell him, and very dangerous; but he promises me that if he can but secure two more cargoes, he'll give it up altogether. I'm sure I wish he would."

"So do I, girl, with all my heart; for it does not become me, an officer of the government, to associate with one who constantly breaks the laws; but yet, I own it, I like the lad, and wish him well."

Margaret did not express her sentiments; but the bright smile on her lips betrayed feelings which she happily had never been taught the necessity of controlling.

Mr. Hogson esteemed himself a very sharp officer; and, as he quitted the castle, he congratulated himself on his acuteness in discovering Buntin's plans. He

had spies in various directions, or rather, people whom he fancied were such, though every one of them was well known to the smugglers and kept in pay by them. By them the information he had gained from Margaret was fully corroborated, and accordingly he gave the necessary orders to watch for the cutter at the spot indicated, while he collected a strong body of men to seize her cargo as soon as the smugglers attempted to run it. His arrangements were made with considerable judgment, and could not, he felt certain, fail of success, having stationed signal-men on every height in the neighbourhood of —— Bay, to give the earliest notice of the smugglers' approach. As soon as it was dark, he himself, with the main body of coast-guard men, all well armed, set off by different routes, to remain in ambush near the spot. While they lay there, they heard several people pass them on their way to the shore, whom they rightly conjectured were those whose business it was to carry the tubs and bales up the cliffs to their hides, as soon as landed. The night was very dark, for there was no moon, and the sky was cloudy; and though there was a strong breeze, there was not sufficient sea on to prevent a landing; in fact, it was just the night the smugglers would take advantage of. Mr. Hogson, having stationed his men, buttoned up his pea-jacket, and drawing his south-wester over his

ears, set off along the shore to reconnoitre. He rubbed his hands with satisfaction when he perceived a number of people collected on the beach, and others approaching from various directions.

"I'm pretty sure of forty or fifty pounds at least," he muttered, "and if I can but nab Master Joe himself, I'll soon bring his coy sweetheart to terms, I warrant. Ah! the cutter must be getting in with the land, or these people would not be assembling yet."

Just then a gleam of bright light shot forth from the cliffs, at no great distance from where he was standing; it was answered by the gleam of a lantern from the sea, which was instantly again obscured. He watched with intense anxiety, without moving for some minutes, when he thought that he observed two dark objects glancing over the waters towards the shore. His difficulty was to select the proper moment for his attack. If he appeared too soon, the people on shore would give notice, and the boats would return to the cutter; if he did not reach them directly after they touched the shore, he knew from experience, that he should certainly find them empty, a minute or two sufficing to carry off the whole cargo. At last he had no doubt that the smugglers were at hand; and, as fast as his legs could carry him, he hurried back to bring up his men.

We must now return to the 'Pretty Polly.' Besides Joe Buntin, the crew of the cutter consisted of Dick Davis, Tom Figgit, and Jack Calloway, as thorough seamen as were ever collected together, and all of them licensed pilots for the Channel, each having a share in the craft: then there were besides them, twice this number of men, shipped on certain occasions, who, though they received a share of the profits, had no property in her. Joe had determined to run great risks this voyage, in the hopes of making large profits, and had invested a large part of his property in the venture, which his agent had prepared ready for shipment at Cherbourg. The wind shifted round to the nor'ard, and the 'Pretty Polly' had a quick run across the Channel. The evening of the day she left Fairport, she was riding at anchor in the magnificent harbour of Cherbourg. As soon as they arrived, he and his mates went on shore, and the agent, not expecting him that evening, being out of the way, they betook themselves to a *café* on the quay, overlooking the harbour. Joe always made himself at home wherever he went, and although he had no particular aptitude for learning languages, he managed, without any great difficulty, to carry on a conversation in French, and his thorough good-nature and ready fund of humour, gained him plenty of friends among the members of the great nation.

The house of entertainment into which the Englishmen walked, is entitled "Le Café de la Grande Nation." The room was large, and had glass doors opening on the quay, through which a view of the harbour was obtained. It was full of little round tables, with marble slabs, surrounded with chairs, and the walls were ornamented wtth glowing pictures of naval engagements, in which the tricolour floated proudly at the mast-heads of most of the ships, while a few crippled barks, with their masts shot away, and their sails in tatters, had the British ensign trailing in the water. The prospect before them was highly picturesque. Directly in front was an old tower, the last remnant of the ancient Walls of Cherbourg. Beyond, spread out before them, was the broad expanse of its superb harbour, capable of containing all the fleets of France. In the centre, where labourers were busily at work, was the breakwater, the intended rival of Plymouth, one entrance guarded by the fort of Querqueville, the other by that of Pelée; and on the western shore, guarded by numerous ranges of batteries, was the naval arsenal and dockyard, the pride of the people of Cherbourg, and which, when finished, is intended to surpass anything of the kind possessed by the *perfide Anglais.*

Joe and his friends, having ordered some *eau de vie*

and water, and lighted their cigars, took their seats near the door. They did not stand much on ceremony in passing their remarks on all they saw, particularly at the men-of-war's men who were strolling about the town.

"My eyes, Dick," exclaimed Tom Figgit, "look at them fellows with their red waistcoats and tight jackets, which look as if they were made for lads half their size, and their trousers with their sterns in the fore part. Just fancy them going aloft."

"They are rum enough, but, to my mind, not such queer-looking chaps as the sodgers," answered Dick.

"Do you know, Dick, that I've often thought that a Frenchman must be cast out of quite a different mould to an Englishman. The clothes of one never would fit t'other. It has often puzzled me to account for it."

"Why, Tom, it would puzzle one if one had to account for all the strange things in the world," answered the other. "You might just as well ask why all the women about here wear caps as big as balloons; they couldn't tell themselves, I warrant."

Just then their conversation was broken off, that they might listen to Joe, who had entered into a warm discussion with the boatswain, or some such officer of one of the French ships-of-war on the relative qualities

of their respective navies. The *salle* was full at the time of naval and military officers of inferior grades, douaniers, gens-d'armes, and worthies of a similar stamp, all smoking, and spitting, and gesticulating, and talking together.

"Comment, Monsieur Buntin," said the Frenchman; "do you mean to say that you have got an arsenal as large as le notre de Cherbourg in the whole of England?"

"I don't know how that may be," answered Joe, quietly; "Portsmouth isn't small, and Plymouth isn't small, but perhaps we don't require them so big. We get our enemies to build ships for us."

"Bah," exclaimed the Frenchman, shrugging his shoulders; "les perfides!"

Just then a fine frigate was seen rounding Point Querqueville. Like a stately swan slowly she glided through the water till, when she approached the town her rigging was crowded with men, her courses were clewed up, her topsails and top-gallant sails were furled, and she swang round to her anchor. She was a model of symmetry and beauty, and the Frenchmen looked on with admiration.

"There," exclaimed Joe's friend, "n'est-ce pas que c'est belle? Have you got a ship in the whole English navy like her?"

"I don't know," answered Joe, innocently. "But if there came a war, we very soon should, I can tell you."

"Comment?" said the Frenchman.

"Why you see, monsieur, we should have she."

"Sare!" exclaimed half a dozen Frenchmen, starting up and drawing their swords. "Do you mean to insult La Grande Nation?"

Whereupon Tom Figgit and Dick Davis, though they did not exactly comprehend the cause of offence, jumped up also, and prepared for a skirmish, which might have ended somewhat seriously for the three Englishmen, had not Joe's agent at that moment appeared and acted as a pacificator between them, Joe assuring them that he had no intention of insulting them or any one of their nation, and that he had merely said what he thought would be the case.

Joe did not spend a longer time than was absolutely necessary at Cherbourg, and as soon as he got his cargo on board, the 'Pretty Polly' was once more under weigh for England. Her hold was stowed with much valuable merchandise, chiefly silks, laces, and spirits. She had also on deck a number of empty tubs, and a few bales filled with straw. As soon as he had got clear of the land, the wind, which had at first been

southerly, shifted to the south-west, and it soon came on to blow very fresh. This he calculated would bring him upon the English coast at too early an hour for his purposes, so when he had run about two-thirds of his distance, he lay to, with his foresail to windward, waiting for the approach of evening.

As he walked the deck of his little vessel, with Tom Figgit by his side, he every now and then broke into a low quiet laugh. At last he gave vent to his thoughts in words.

"If we don't do the revenue this time, Tom, say I'm no better than one of them big-sterned mounsieurs. What a rage that dirty spy, Hogson, will be in. Ha, ha, ha! It's a pleasure to think of it."

Tom fully participated in all his leader's sentiments, and by their light-hearted gaiety one might have supposed that they had some amusing frolic in view, instead of an undertaking full of peril to their personal liberty and property. All this time a man was stationed at the mast-head to keep a look-out in every direction, that no revenue-cruiser should approach them without due notice, to enable them to get out of her way.

We must now return to Lieutenant Hogson. As soon as he felt certain that the boats had landed, he hurried down with his men to the beach. His approach

was apparently not perceived, and while the smugglers were actively engaged in loading themselves with tubs and bales of goods, he was among them.

"Stand and deliver, in the king's name," he shouted out, collaring the first smuggler he could lay hands on; his men following his example.

For a moment the smugglers appeared to be panic-struck by the suddenness of the attack; but soon recovering themselves, as many as were at liberty threw down their loads and made their escape.

"Seize the boats," he added. "Here, take charge of this prisoner." And rushing into the water, he endeavoured to capture the boat nearest to him; but just as he had got his hand on her gunnel, the people in her, standing up with their oars in their hands, gave her so hearty a shove, that, lifting on the next wave, she glided out into deep water while he fell with his face into the surf, from which he had some difficulty in recovering himself with a thorough drenching; the other boat getting off in the same manner. In the mean time, signals had been made by the revenue men stationed on the neighbouring heights, that the expected run had been attempted, and the coast-guard officers and their people from the nearest stations hurried up to participate in the capture. Some came by land, while others launched their boats in the hopes

of cutting off the 'Pretty Polly' in case she should not have discharged the whole of her cargo.

With muffled oars and quick strokes they pulled across the bay; but if they expected to catch Joe Buntin, or the 'Pretty Polly,' they certainly were disappointed; for although they pulled about in every direction till daylight, not a sign or trace of her did they discover. Not so unfortunate, however, was Lieutenant Hogson, for, although he did not capture his rival, he made a large seizure of tubs, and several bales of silk, as he supposed, and a considerable number of prisoners, which would altogether bring him in no small amount of prize-money. One prisoner he made afforded him considerable satisfaction. It was no other than Tom Figgit, who, having jumped out of the boat with a tub on his back, was seized before he had time to disengage himself from his load, and this, with many a grimace, he was now compelled to carry.

"I hope you've made up your mind for a year in Winchester gaol, Master Tom," said Mr. Hogson, holding a lantern up to his face. "It isn't the first time you've seen its inside, I warrant."

"It would be though, and what's more, I intend to spend my Christmas with my wife and family," answered Tom, doggedly.

The prisoners were now collected, and marched up

to the nearest coast-guard station, but there were so many tubs and bales that the coast-guard men were obliged to load themselves heavily with them, for it was found, that should only a small guard be left to take charge of them, the smugglers would carry them off. The wind whistled coldly, the rain came down in torrents, and the revenue people and their prisoners had a very disagreeable march through the mud up to the station, Tom Figgit being the only person who retained his spirits and his temper—though he grumbled in a comical way at being compelled to carry a tub for other people, and insisted that he should retain it for his trouble at the end of his journey. When he reached the guard-house, he slily tumbled the tub off his shoulders, and down it came on the ground with so heavy a blow that it was stove in. The names of the prisoners were now taken down in due form, and they were told they must be locked up till they could be carried before a magistrate, and be committed to gaol for trial. As soon as the officer had done speaking,

"Please, sir," said Tom, "there's one of the tubs leaking dreadfully, and if it isn't looked to it will all have run out before the morning; though for the matter of that, it doesn't smell much like spirits."

"Bring me a glass," said the lieutenant, who, wet and cold, was longing to have a drop of spirits; "I'll

soon pass an opinion on your *eau de vie*, Master Tom."

Tom smiled, but said nothing, while one of the men brought a glass and broached the leaky tub.

"Show a light here," said Tom; "well, I can't say as how it's got much of the smell of spirits—hang me, if I can make it out."

Tom filled the glass, and, with a profound bow, worthy of a Mandarin, presented it to the officer. Lieutenant Hogson was thirsty, and, without even smelling the potion, he gulped it down.

"Salt water, by George!" he exclaimed, furiously, spitting and spluttering it out with all his might, and giving every expression to his disgust.

Tom, forgetful of the respect due to a king's officer, burst into a fit of uproarious laughter.

"Well, I warned you, sir. I told you there was something odd about it—ha, ha, ha—and now you find what I said was true—ha, ha, ha!"

"What do you mean, you scoundrel?" cried the lieutenant, stamping furiously; "how dare you play such a trick?"

"Nothing, sir, nothing," answered Tom, coolly; "you see I should have been very much surprised if there had been anything else but salt water; for, you see, we was bringing those tubs on shore, full of sea

water, for a poor old lady, who lives someway inland, and her doctors ordered her to try sea-bathing on the coast of France, but as she couldn't go there herself, you see, she has the water carried all the way from there to here. It's a fancy she has, but it's very natural and regular, and we get well paid for it, sir."

"Do you, Master Tom, actually expect me to believe such a pack of gross lies?" stammered out the lieutenant, as well as his rage would let him.

"I don't know, sir," answered the smuggler; "some people believe one thing, some another, and I hope you won't think of keeping us here any longer, seeing as how we've done nothing against the law in landing tubs of salt water for old Missis Grundy up at Snigses farm, sir. You may just go and ax her if what I says isn't as true as gospel. It might be the death of her if she didn't get her salt water to bathe in, you know, sir."

"Old Missis Grundy! I never heard of her before," exclaimed the lieutenant, growing every moment more angry, "and Snigses farm, where's that, I should like to know?"

"Why, sir, you see it's two or three miles off, and rather a difficult road to find," answered Tom, winking at his companions; "you first go up the valley, then you turn down by Waterford Mill, next you keep up

by Dead Man's Lane, and across Carver's Field, and that will bring you about a quarter of the distance."

"Why, you scoundrel," exclaimed the lieutenant, who recognised the names of these places, and knew them to be wide apart, "you impudent rogue, you, —why, you are laughing at me!"

"Oh no, sir," answered Tom, demurely, pulling a lock which hung from his bullet-shaped head, "couldn't think of laughing at you; besides, sir, you knows one can't always make one's face as long as a grave-digger's apprentice's."

"I'll make it long enough before I've done with you, Master Tom, let me tell you," exclaimed the officer. "Now let us see what are in those other casks and bales."

"What all them that your people have had the trouble of carrying up here?" cried Tom; "lord, sir, the tubs, of course, is all full of salt water, too, for Missis Grundy."

"We shall soon see that, my fine fellow," answered the officer, thinking Tom had only told the tale to annoy him; but to make sure, seizing a gimlet, with his own hands he broached tub after tub, his face elongating as he proceeded, and the visions of his prize-money gradually vanished from his eyes. Tom, and the other smugglers looking on all the time with

a derisive smile curling their lips, though prudence prevented their saying anything which might further exasperate the lieutenant.

At last, with an angry oath, he threw down the gimlet. They one and all contained nothing more potent than salt water. He then, with eager haste, anticipating disaster, tore open the bales. They were composed solely of straw and a little packing cloth.

"Them be life-buoys, sir," said Tom, quietly; "we carries them now always, by the recommendation of the Humane Society."

The smugglers now burst into fits of laughter at the rage and disappointment of the outwitted officer, and even his own men could scarcely restrain their tittering at his extravagances. There was, however, not a shadow of excuse for detaining the smugglers. They had a full right to land empty tubs and life-buoys at any hour of the night, and they had not offered the slightest resistance when captured by the coast-guard. In fact, as Tom expressed it while narrating his adventures with high glee to Joe Buntin, they fairly "did the revenue."

The next morning, the 'Pretty Polly' appeared beating up toward Fairport, and before noon she was at her moorings, and Joe was exhibiting a variety of

pretty presents to the delighted eyes of Miss Margaret Ramrod. Rumours were not long in reaching her ears that one of the largest runs which had been known for ages had been made on the coast at some little distance from Fairport, the very night Lieutenant Hogson seized the tubs of salt water; and Joe confessed that he had only one more trip to make before he settled for life.

We need not detail the events of the next few days in the quiet town of Fairport. Those we have narrated served for conversation to the good people for full nine days, and during that time poor Mr. Hogson never once ventured to show his face inside the castle walls, for he had a strong suspicion, though an unjust one, that pretty Mistress Margaret had something to do with his disappointment. For her credit, however, we are certain that she was innocent of any intentional falsehood. Joe suspected that Mr. Hogson would attempt to pump her; so, as we have seen the contents of a bucket of water thrown down a ship's pump to make it suck, Joe took care that the lieutenant should get something for his pains, by telling the young lady to answer, if she was asked, that she had heard him say that he intended landing at —— Bay.

For the three following weeks Joe Buntin contrived to spend several days on shore in the society of Serjeant

Ramrod's family, though the 'Pretty Polly' during that time made several trips down Channel, and was very successful in falling in with some large East Indiamen, the pilotage money of which was considerable; and besides that she landed several rich passengers who paid well, so that Joe was rapidly becoming a wealthy man. He would have been wise to stick to his lawful and regular calling; but there was so much excitement in smuggling, and the profits of one trip were so much more than he could gain in several winters' hard toil, that he could not resist the temptation. Had he taken the trouble of comparing himself with others, he would, we suspect, have considered himself a more honest man than the railroad speculators of the present day.

It was again the last quarter of the moon, and the nights were getting dark, when the 'Pretty Polly' once more left her moorings in Fairport harbour. Now it must not be supposed that she ran over at once to the coast of France, and taking in a cargo, returned as fast as she could to England. Joe was not so green as to do that. He, on the contrary, as before, cruised about the Channel till he had put two of his pilots on board different vessels, and, to disarm suspicion, they took very good care to present themselves at Fairport as soon after their return as pos-

sible; and even Mr. Hogson began to fear that there was very little prospect of making prize-money by capturing the 'Pretty Polly,' or of wreaking his vengeance on Joe.

As soon as the last ship into which he had put a pilot was out of sight, Joe shaped his course for Cherbourg, where he found a cargo of tubs ready for him, but he this time did not take any silks in his venture. In a few hours he was again on his way across the Channel. The weather was very favourable. Now some people would suppose that we mean to say there was a clear sky, a smooth sea, and a gentle breeze. Far from it. It blew so fresh that it might almost be called half a gale of wind; the clouds chased each other over the sky, and threatened to obscure even the stars, which might shed a tell-tale light on the world, and there was a heavy sea running; in truth, it gave every promise of being a dirty night. Nothing, however, in this sublunary world can be depended on except woman's love, and that is durable as adamant, true as the pole-star, and unequalled. The 'Pretty Polly' was about fifteen miles from the land, and Joe and Tom Figgit were congratulating themselves on the favourable state of the weather, when the breeze began to fall and veer about, and at last shifted round to about east-south-east. Gradually the sea went

down, the clouds cleared off, and the sun shone forth from the blue sky bright and warm.

"Now this is what I call a do," exclaimed Tom Figgit, in a tone of discontent. "Who'd have thought it? Here were we expecting the finest night Heaven ever made for a run at this time of the year, and now I shouldn't be surprised that there won't be a cloud in the sky just as we ought to be putting the things on shore."

"It can't be helped, Tom," answered Joe; "our good-luck has not done with us yet, depend on it."

"I wish I was sure of it," replied Tom, who was in a desponding mood;—he had taken too much cognac the night before.—"Remember the story about the pitcher going too often to the well getting a cracked nose. Now, captain, if I was you I'd just about ship and run back to Cherbourg till the weather thickens again. We should lay our course."

"Gammon, Tom. What's the matter with you?" exclaimed Joe. "One would suppose that you had been and borrowed one of your wife's petticoats, and was going to turn old woman."

"You know, captain, that I've very little of an old woman about me, and that it's for you I'm afeared more than for myself," replied Tom, in a reproachful tone. "A year in gaol and the loss of a few pounds

is the worst that could happen to me, while you would lose the vessel and cargo, and something else you lay more value on than either, I suspect."

"Well, well, old boy, we'll be guided by reason," said Joe. "We won't run any unnecessary risks, depend on it. I'll just take a squint round with the glass to make sure that no cruiser has crept up to us with this shift of wind."

Saying this, Joe carefully swept the horizon with his telescope, but for some time it rested on nothing but the dancing sea and the distant land. At last, however, his eye caught a glimpse of what, to him, appeared a very suspicious-looking sail dead to windward.

"What do you make her out to be?" he asked, handing the glass to Tom Figgit, and pointing towards the sail, which appeared no bigger than a sea-gull's wing gleaming in the rays of the sun. Tom took a long look at her.

"She's a big cutter, and no mistake," he answered, still keeping his eye to the tube. "And what's more, she's standing this way, and coming up hand over hand with a fresh breeze. I don't like the cut of her jib."

"Let's have another squint at her," said Joe, taking the glass from the mate's hand, then letting

it come down suddenly, and giving a slap on his thigh, he exclaimed, "You are right, Tom, by George; and what's more, if I don't mistake by the way her gaff top-sail stands, she's the 'Ranger' cutter, which we gave the go-by in the winter, and they've vowed vengeance against us ever since."

Davis and Calloway then gave their opinion, which coincided with the rest, nor did there appear to be any doubt that the approaching vessel was the 'Ranger.'

The wind, as we said, had fallen, but there was still a considerable swell, the effects of the past gale, which made the little vessel pitch and tumble about, and considerably retarded her progress. Joe now scanned his own sails thoroughly to see that they drew well, and then glanced his eye over the side of the cutter to judge how fast she was going through the water. He was far from satisfied with the result of his observations.

"It won't do," he remarked; "we must be up slick, and run for it, or she'll be overhauling us before dark. If we was blessed with the breeze she's got, we wouldn't mind her.—Rig out the square-sail boom, bend on the square-sail. Come, bear a hand, my hearties, be quick about it None of us have much fancy for a twelvemonth in Winchester gaol, I suppose. That'll do; now hoist away."

And himself setting an example of activity, the helm being put up, the main sheet was eased off, a large square-sail set, and the cutter dead before the wind, was running away from her supposed enemy. The square top-sail was next hoisted, and every stitch of canvas she could carry was clapped on, and under the influence of the returning breeze, the 'Pretty Polly' danced merrily over the waters, though not at all approaching to the speed her impatient crew desired. Tom Figgit shook his head.

"I thought it would be so," he muttered. "I knowed it when I seed the wind dropping. Well, if it weren't for Joe, and to see that b——d coast-guarder, Hogson, a grinning at us, and rubbing his paws with delight, I shouldn't care. If we might fight for it, it would be a different thing, but to be caught like mice by a cat, without a squeak for life, is very agrawating, every one must allow."

Tom had some reason for his melancholy forebodings, for the 'Pretty Polly' most certainly appeared to be out of luck. Do all she could, the 'Ranger,' bringing up a fresh breeze, gained rapidly on her. The people in the revenue cruiser had evidently seen her soon after she saw them, and suspecting her character, had been using every exertion to come up with her. They had, in fact, long been

on the watch for her, and quickly recognized her as their old friend. The smugglers walked the deck, vainly whistling for a wind, but though they all whistled in concert the partial breeze refused to swell their sails till it had filled those of their enemy. Nothing they could do, either wetting their sails, altering her trim by shifting the cargo, would make the 'Pretty Polly' go along faster. One great object was to retain a considerable distance from her till darkness covered the face of the deep, when they might hope more easily to make their escape.

As the sun went down the heavens grew most provokingly clear, and the stars shone forth from the pure sky, so that the smugglers both saw and were seen by the revenue cutter, and the character of the 'Pretty Polly' was too well known by every cruiser on the station to allow her to hope to escape unquestioned. Still Joe boldly held on his course. He never withdrew his eye from his pursuer in order to be ready to take advantage of the slightest change in her proceedings, but he soon saw that he must make the best use of his heels and his wits, or lose his cargo. Poor Joe, he thought of his charming Margaret, he thought of his good resolutions, he thought of Tom's evil prognostications, but he was not a fellow to be daunted at trifles, and he still trusted that something in the

chapter of accidents would turn up to enable him to escape.

The breeze at last came up with the 'Pretty Polly,' but at the same time the 'Ranger' drew still nearer. All their means of expediting her movements had been exhausted, every inch of canvas she could carry was spread aloft, and even below the main-boom and square-sail boom water sails had been extended, so that the craft looked like a large sea-bird with a small black body, skimming with outspread wings along the surface of the deep. The land at no great distance, lay broad on their beam to starboard. With anger and vexation they saw that all their efforts to save their cargo would probably be fruitless.

"It can't be helped, my lads," cried Joe, "better luck next time. In with all that light canvas. Be smart about it, stand by the square-sail halliards—lower away; hoist the foresail again; down with the helm, Bill, while we get a pull on the main-sheet. We must run into shoal water and sink the tubs. It will come to that, I see."

As Joe said, there was no time to lose, for the revenue cruiser was now little more than a mile distant, looming large in the fast-increasing obscurity of night. There promised, however, to be too much light during the night for them to hope to elude the

sharp and practised eyes of her look-outs. While the smuggler, with the wind nearly abeam, was running in for the land, her crew were busily employed in getting the tubs on deck and slinging them in long lines together, with heavy weights attached over the side, so as to be able, by cutting a single lanyard, to let them all sink at once. No sooner did they alter their course, than their pursuer did the same. They had, at all events, gained the important advantage of escaping being overhauled in daylight. They now stood steadily on till they got within a quarter of a mile of the land, the revenue cutter not having gained materially on them. By this time every tub was either on deck or over the side.

"Starboard the helm a little, Tom,—steady now," sung out Joe; "we'll have the marks on directly; I can just make out Pucknose Knoll and Farleigh church steeple. Now mind, when I sing out cut, cut all of you."

It was not without some difficulty that the points he mentioned could be distinguished, and none but eyes long accustomed to peer through darkness could have seen objects on the shore at all. His aim was to bring certain marks on the shore in two lines to bisect each other, at which point the tubs were to be sunk, thus enabling him to find them again at a future day.

"Starboard again, a little, Tom—steady now—that will do—luff you may, luff—I have it. Cut now, my hearties, cut," he exclaimed, and the next moment a heavy splash told that all the tubs slung outside had been cut away and sunk to the bottom. "Stand by to heave the rest overboard," he continued, and a minute afterwards, with fresh bearings, the remainder of the cargo was committed to the deep. "Now, let's haul up for Fairport, and get home to comfort our wives and sweethearts. Better luck next time."

With this philosophical observation, Joe buttoned up his pea-jacket, and twisted his red comforter round his neck, determined to make himself comfortable, and to bear his loss like a man. By the 'Pretty Polly's' change of course, she soon drew near the 'Ranger,' when a shot from one of the guns of the latter came flying over her mast head. On this significant notice that the cruiser wished to speak her, Joe, not being anxious for a repetition of the message, let fly his jib-sheet, and his cutter coming round on the other tack, he kept his foresail to windward and his helm down, thus remaining almost stationary. A boat soon pulled alongside, with the mate of the cruiser, who, with his crew, each carrying a lantern, overhauled every part of the vessel's hold, but not even a drop of brandy was to be found, nor a quid of tobacco.

"Sorry, sir, you've taken all this trouble," said Joe, touching his hat to the officer. "I thought, sir, you know'd we was a temp'rance vessel."

It was diamond cut diamond. The officer looked at Joe, and burst out laughing, though disappointed at not making a seizure.

"Tell that to the marines, Mister Buntin," he answered. "If you hadn't, half an hour ago, enough spirits on board to make the whole ship's company of a line-of-battle ship as drunk as fiddlers, I'm a Dutchman."

"I can't help, sir, what you thinks," replied Joe, humbly; "but I suppose you won't detain us? We wants to get to Fairport to-night, to drink tea with our wives, and nurse our babies."

"You may go, my fine fellow, and we will bring in your tubs in the morning," answered the mate, as he stepped into his boat.

"Thank ye, sir," said Joe, making a polite bow, but looking very much inclined to expedite his departure with a kick, but discretion withheld him.

"Let draw," he sang out, in a voice which showed the true state of his feelings beneath his assumed composure; "now about with her."

In a short time after, the 'Pretty Polly' was safely moored in Fairport river.

The next morning at daybreak, the 'Ranger' was seen hovering in rather dangerous proximity to the spot where the tubs had been sunk. She was then observed to get her dredges out, and to be groping evidently for the hidden treasures. In the course of the day, Joe and his crew had the mortification to see her come into the harbour with the greater part of their cargo on board. Of course they all looked as innocent as if none of them had ever before seen a tub, for there was nothing to betray them, though it was not pleasant to see their property in the hands of others. The revenue cutter, then hauling alongside the quay, sent all the tubs she had on board up to the castle, where they were shut up securely while she went back to grope for more.

Joe watched all these proceedings with apparently calm indifference, walking up and down all the time on the quay, with a short pipe in his mouth, and his hands in his pockets. No sooner, however, had darkness set in, than he and his companions might have been seen consulting earnestly together, and going round to the most trustworthy of their acquaintance. What was the subject of their consultations may hereafter be guessed at. Their plans, whatever they were, were soon matured, and then Joe repaired to pay his accustomed visit to Serjeant Ramrod and his grand-daughter.

Joe Buntin was, as I have hinted, not the only lover Margaret Ramrod possessed, which was, of course, no fault of hers. One of them, for there might have been half-a-dozen at least, was James Lawson, a coast-guard man, belonging to Fairport; and if he was aware that he was a rival of his superior officer it did not afflict him. As it happened, he was stationed at the castle to guard the tubs which had been captured in the morning. Having seen that everything was safe, he soon grew tired of watching on the top of the castle, for it was a dark, cold night, with a thick, driving rain, and a high wind, so he persuaded himself that there could be no harm looking into Serjeant Ramrod's snug room, lighted up by pretty Margaret's bright eyes, and warmed by a blazing fire. The serjeant welcomed him cordially, and Margaret mixed him a glass of hot brandy and water, while discussing which, a knock was heard at the castle gate, on which Mistress Margaret, throwing her apron over her head, ran out to admit the visitors. She was absent a minute or more; probably she had some difficulty in again closing the gates on so windy a night: at last she returned, followed by no less a person than Joe Buntin, and his shadow, Tom Figgit.

A smile stole over Margaret's pretty mouth as she

watched Joe, who looked as fierce as he could at Lawson, and by Ramrod's invitation sat himself down directly opposite the revenue-man. Lawson was not to be stared out of countenance, so, notwithstanding Joe's angry glances, he firmly kept his post. Tom Figgit quietly sipped his grog, eyeing Lawson all the time much in the way that a cat does a mouse she is going to devour, so that at last the revenue-man, feeling himself rather uncomfortable, he scarcely knew why, helped himself thoughtlessly to another stiff glass. Joe laughed and talked for all the party, and told several capital stories, contriving in the interval to whisper a word into Margaret's ear, at which she looked down and laughed slily. She was soon afterwards seen filling up the coast-guard man's glass, only by mistake she poured in Hollands instead of water. The error was not discovered, and Lawson became not only very sagacious but brave in the extreme. After some time he recollected that it was his duty to keep a look-out from the top of the castle, and accordingly rose to resume his post. Joe on this jumped up also, and wishing the old couple and their grand-daughter good-night, took his departure, followed by Tom; Serjeant Ramrod and Lawson closing the gates securely behind them.

No sooner were Joe and his mate outside the walls

than they darted down a small alley which led to the water, and at a little sheltered slip they found a boat, with a coil of rope and some blocks stowed away in the stern-sheets. Joe, giving a peculiarly low whistle, two other men appeared crawling from under a boat, which had been turned with the keel uppermost on the beach, and then all four jumping in, pulled round underneath the castle wall to a nook, where they could not be observed from the quay even in the day-time.

It was, as we have mentioned, blowing and raining, and as dark as pitch, so that our friends had no reason to complain of the weather. After feeling about for some time, Joe discovered a small double line, to which he fastened one of the stouter ropes, and hauling away on one end of it, brought it back again into the boat. Who had rove the small line we cannot say, but we fear that there was a little traitor in the garrison; perhaps Joe or Tom had contrived to do it before they entered the serjeant's sitting-room.

"Hold on fast," Joe whispered to his comrades; "I'll be up in a moment." Saying this, he climbed up the rope, and soon had his face flush with the summit of the castle walls. Looking round cautiously, he observed no one, so he climbed over the parapet, and advanced across the platform to the top of a flight of steps which communicated with the lower part of the

building. He looked over the railing, but his eyes could not pierce the gloom, so he descended the steps, and had the satisfaction to find Lawson fast asleep at the bottom of them, sheltered from the rain by one of the arches. "All's right: he won't give us much trouble, at all events," he muttered to himself; and returning to the parapet he summoned his companions. Two other boats had now joined the first, and, one after the other, twelve smugglers scaled the walls. Others were, it must be understood, watching at various points in the neighbourhood, to give the earliest notice of the approach of the coast-guard. Joe stationed two men by the side of Lawson to bind and gag him if he awoke, which he was not likely to do, while the rest proceeded with their work.

They soon contrived to break open the door of the store, opening from the platform, where the tubs had been deposited; then each man carrying one at a time, like ants at their work, they transported them to the parapet of the castle-wall. From thence, with great rapidity, they were lowered into the boats, and then conveyed round to the foot of a garden belonging to an uninhabited house, which, of course, had the character of being haunted by spirits. Joe and his friends worked with a will, as much delighted with the thoughts of doing the revenue as at recovering their property.

The greater number had been thus secured when

the rain ceased, and the clouds driving away, the smugglers were afraid of being seen by their opponents. They therefore secured the door of the nearly empty store, and all descending, unrove the rope from the breech of the gun to which it had been fastened, so as to leave no trace of their proceedings.

The next morning Lawson, on recovering from his tipsy slumbers, seeing the door closed, reported that all was right. Mr. Hogson was the first person to make the discovery that all was wrong, and his astonishment and rage may be more easily imagined than described. Nearly every tub of the rich prize had disappeared; and the lieutenant swore he was certain that wicked little vixen, Margaret Ramrod, had something to do with it.

Neither Serjeant Ramrod nor Lawson could in any way account for it; and as it would have been a subject of mirth to all their brother officers, who would not have shared in the prize, the authorities of Fairport thought it wiser not to say much on the subject. Several persons were suspected of having had a hand in the transaction, but the smugglers were known to be too true to each other to afford the remotest chance of discovering the culprits.

Soon after this, Joe Buntin married Margaret Ramrod; and, wonderful to relate, forswore smuggling ever after. Whether her persuasions, or from

finding it no longer profitable, had most influence, is not known; at all events, he is now one of the most successful and active pilots belonging to Fairport, and though he does not mention names, he is very fond, among other stories, of telling how a certain friend of his did the revenue."

As soon as old Sleet had finished his story, which was much more effective when told by him than as it now stands written down by me, he scraped his right foot back, made a swing with his hat and was rolling forward, when Hearty cried out, "Stop, stop, old friend, your lips want moistening after that long yarn, I'm sure. What will you have, Champagne, or Claret, or Sherry, or Brandy, or Rum, or ——?"

The honest seaman grinned from ear to ear.

"Grog," he answered, emphatically. "There's nothing like that to my mind, Mr. Hearty. It's better nor all your French washes put together."

Due praise was bestowed on Joe Buntin's history, but he evidently thought the extra glass of grog he had won of far more value.

"Health to you, gentlemen and ladies all, and may this sweet craft never want a master nor a mistress either," he rapped out: then fearing he had said something against propriety, he rolled away to join his messmates forward.

CHAPTER XI.

THE POLACCA BRIG AGAIN.—THE 'ZEBRA' IN CHASE.—REFLECTIONS ON AFRICA AND THE SLAVE-TRADE.—BRINE'S OWN STORY.—THE GUERILLA'S LEAP, A TRUE TALE OF PORTUGAL.

It was now time for the officers of the 'Zebra' to return on board their ship. Another night and day passed away much in the same manner as its predecessors. All this time we were edging over to the African coast. Miss Mizen was rapidly recovering her strength, indeed she could no longer be declared an invalid, and it was very evident that a sea-life perfectly agreed with her.

Though I missed Bubble's fun and anecdotes, and his merry laugh and good-natured visage, I must confess that I much enjoyed the society of the two ladies. Mrs. Mizen was a kind-hearted, right-minded, good-natured, sensible, motherly woman, without a particle of affectation or nonsense of any sort. She

had seen a good deal of the world, and of the people in it, and could talk well of what she had seen. Under present circumstances, indeed, I preferred her, as a companion, to her daughter. Barring the difference of age they were very like each other. Miss Mizen also treated me with the utmost frankness and kindness as the friend of her intended husband, and I often enjoyed a pleasant conversation with her, though, of course, it more frequently fell to my share to entertain her mother.

While the fine weather lasted the life we led was excessively pleasant, but as winter was now rapidly approaching, we knew that we must look out for squalls and heavy seas. We had, as I before remarked, been making our way to the westward along the African coast, now making the land, and then standing off again at night-time.

One morning when daylight broke, we found ourselves rather in shore of the brig. As I came on deck to relieve Porpoise, I saw her signalizing. We got the signal-book.

"What is Rullock talking about?" asked my brother-officer, as I was looking over the leaves of Marriot's well-known work.

"A suspicious sail to the north-west. Stay where you are. I shall chase, but be back by nightfall,"

said I; on which Porpoise ordered the answering signal to be hoisted.

The brig now crowded all sail, but as she kept away, I saw that the bunting was again at work.

"If we do not appear by noon to-morrow, return to Malta," said I, interpreting the flags. "And so our pleasant cruise will be up: but all things pleasant must come to an end. I wish it could have lasted longer."

"Well, Porpoise, what do you make of the stranger he is after?"

"By —— that she is no other than our friend the Greek polacca brig," he exclaimed, almost letting his glass fall from aloft, where he had gone to get a look of the vessel the brig was chasing. "I have a great mind to rouse Hearty up, and get him to disobey orders, and go in chase of her also. I don't like the thoughts of the pirate being captured without our being present."

"Remember that we have ladies on board, and I don't think Hearty will be inclined to run the risk of carrying away our spars or mast for any such gratification," I remarked. "He'll be for obedience in this case, depend on it."

"That's the worst of having ladies on board," answered Porpoise, with a sigh. "But I say they have

been rather more alive on board the brig than I should have given them credit for. How could they have suspected that the polacca out there was our friend?"

"You forget that Will Bubble is on board, and probably he was on deck, and aloft, indeed, at sunrise, and made out the Greek," I answered, not that I considered that there was any want of strict discipline or sufficient alertness kept on board the brig, though the crew were anything but first-rate specimens of men-of-war's men.

By-the-by that reminds me that I should like to say a few words about manning the navy. But I won't, though, simply because the subject is just here somewhat out of place. We are off the northern coast of Africa in a yacht with some ladies on board, and they might be bored, and we have to watch the proceedings of the brig-of-war and the vessel of which she is in chase. Only I would strongly urge any members of parliament, or other law-makers, or persons of influence whose eyes may glance over these pages to think, and talk, and *do* very seriously about the matter. It will not bear letting alone or sleeping over. Something must be done, and at once. I've known ships-of-war go to sea with not a quarter of the men seamen—because seamen were not to be got. How would it fare with us had we to engage in a downright earnest

naval war? Our men, it will be answered, will fight like Britons; so they will, I doubt not, but is it just to oppose landsmen to the well-trained seamen of other nations? Is it just to the able seamen to make them do the work which should be shared by others? But now we will again look after the brig-of-war and the chase.

The polacca, as soon as she saw that the British man-of-war was in pursuit of her, made all sail to the northward and westward. Old Rullock was evidently determined that she should not escape from any neglect on his part of carrying enough sail. Royals and studdensails were quickly set, and under a wide spread of snow-white canvas away stood the 'Zebra,' leaving us jogging slowly on with the purpose of returning to the spot whence we started. Hearty's surprise, as may be supposed, was very considerable, and so was that of his lady guests, when they found that the brig had run away from us.

"However, Mrs. Mizen, I suppose we must obey orders, must we not?" said he, with a shrug of his shoulders. "If you do not blame Captain Rullock for his treachery, I am sure that I do not, since he has left with me hostages of so much value for his safe return."

Mrs. Mizen and her daughter seemed to think the affair a very good joke, only they could not understand

why the cutter should not go in chase of the polacca as well as the brig-of-war.

"Perhaps the captain wishes to have all the honour of capturing the pirate by himself without our assistance," observed Porpoise; "I suppose the fellow will show fight should he come up with him."

"No fear of that," I remarked. "The truth is, I suspect that Captain Rullock feared, that had he allowed the yacht to proceed in chase of the pirate, we might have come up with her before he could, and had to bear the brunt of the action. He probably would not have cared very much about that, had there been only four yachting gentlemen on board to be shot at, but the case was very different when his sister and niece might be placed in danger."

"He did very right. There can be no dispute about it," said Hearty. "We must bear our disappointment like men, and during breakfast we will consider what amusement we can afford our guests, to recompense them for the absence of the brig in the landscape—or rather seascape we ought to call it—for little enough of the land have we had this cruise."

We had a great deal of amusing conversation during breakfast. It is a pleasant meal everywhere, if people are well and in spirits, and nowhere is it more pleasant than at sea under the same provisions.

"What do you say to a look at the African coast, Mrs. Mizen?" exclaimed Hearty. "We could get there very soon—could we not, Porpoise?"

"We should be well in with the land, so as to have a good view of it before the evening, and if the wind holds, we might be back here before the brig-of-war returns to look for us," was the answer.

"Capital; then let us stand in there at once," said Hearty. "It is a fine, mountainous, bold coast, very picturesque. You will have your sketching things ready, I hope," he added, looking at Miss Mizen. He had not learnt to call her Laura when any one else was present.

Miss Mizen said she would get her drawing-board and colour-box ready, and Porpoise went on deck to put the cutter's head to the southward. A steady breeze from the south-west enabled us to stand in for the land close hauled. As we rapidly approached it, the mountains, with their lofty peaks and wooded sides, seemed to rise out of the water like the scene at a theatre, till the lower lands at their base—rocky, undulating heights, and even the sea-shore became clearly visible.

"How very different is this scenery from the common notion of Africa," said Miss Mizen, as, with Hearty's help, she was arranging her sketching-board to make a

view of the coast. "I have hitherto always pictured it to myself as a country of arid sands and dense jungle."

"You'd find jungle enough and sand enough in many parts, Miss Mizen, where I have been," observed Porpoise. "But both in the north and south there are districts which will vie in fertility with most in the world. Just think of Egypt; what an abundance of corn does that produce! All along this north coast are many fertile districts; so there are on the west coast, only it is rather too hot there to be pleasant; and then at the Cape and Natal are to be found spots rich in various productions."

"You draw a glowing picture of the country, Mr. Porpoise," observed Mrs. Mizen.

"I do, ma'am, because the country deserves it," he answered. "The world owes a great deal to Africa, and I should like to see every possible attempt made to repay it by continued and strenuous efforts for the civilization of her people: The work is a very great one, there is no doubt about that, and a few feeble and isolated efforts will not accomplish it. The merchant princes of England must take the matter up, and send out several expeditions at the same time. The officers should be experienced, energetic men, the vessels well supplied with merchandise, and well armed to protect it. But what can we hope for while the

abominable slave-trade still flourishes? England is doing her best to put it down, but she is but ill-supported by other nations. America, with all her boasting about freedom, protects and encourages those engaged in it; while France, professing to be the most civilized and liberal of countries, does the same. Spain and Portugal only occasionally pretend to interfere with a very bad grace, and secretly aid and abet the wretches carrying it on under their flag. I say at any cost, and at every cost, England must put it down. No matter if she goes to war with all the world to do so. It will be a glorious war for the most holy cause, and honest men will be able to pray with sincerity and faith, that heaven will protect her in it."

"I am very glad to hear you speak so, Mr. Porpoise," said Mrs. Mizen; "I will answer for it, that no war would be so popular among the women of England as a war against slavery and the slave-trade. No one worthy of the name of an Englishwoman would refuse to sell her jewels and everything of value to support it."

"That's the spirit that will put it down, ma'am," exclaimed Porpoise, enthusiastically. "When we sailors know that we have the prayers and good wishes of the ladies of England with us, we should very soon sweep all our enemies from the seas."

The rest of the party responded in most respects to these sentiments. Hearty suggested that much might be hoped for from a wise and firm diplomacy, and by calmly waiting the course of events.

"No, no," answered Porpoise. "That's what the people in parliament say, when they want to shelve a question. Do nothing and let affairs take their own course. It's a very easy way of doing nothing, but that is not like you, Mr. Hearty. You would manage the matter in a very different way, I'm sure, if it was left to you."

"I should be very much puzzled if the question were left for me to decide," said Hearty. "What do you think I should do?"

"Oh, I will soon tell you what you would do," replied Porpoise. "Why, you would look out for all the energetic, dashing officers you could find, and send them to the coast in command of as many fast steamers, and other small craft, with orders to overhaul every suspicious sail they could find on the coast. Then you would have a whacking big fleet in the Channel, and several others in different parts of the world. You would not forget to keep your coast defences in good order, and to have a compact, well-disciplined army on shore, and a numerous trained militia, ready to call out at a moment's notice. That's what you and

every other sensible man would do, Mr. Hearty, and then I think we need have no fear that any one would causelessly attempt to molest us, or that we should be unable to make other nations keep their treaties with us."

"Bravo, Porpoise, bravo!" cried Hearty. "I wish that you were Prime Minister, or First Lord of the Admiralty, or Dictator, or something of that sort for a short time. I doubt not but that you would get things in prime order in a very short time."

While this conversation was going on, we were rapidly drawing in with the coast. Miss Mizen made two or three very masterly sketches, though the blue sea and water filled up the larger portion of the paper. The less there is in a subject the more does it exhibit a master's talent if the picture is interesting.

A fresh breeze had been blowing all day, but towards evening the wind fell, and the cutter lay floating idly on the water. We were assembled after dinner as usual on deck, when Hearty proposed a yarn.

"I wish Bubble were here," said he. "He would certainly have one ready; and a fresh yarn, yet in manuscript, is fifty times more attractive than when it has become common to the world in print."

"Could not Mr. Brine favour us with a story?"

said Miss Mizen, in an irresistibly sweet tone. "He, I am sure, can invent one for the occasion, should he not have a story written already."

I could not deny that I had a tale in my portfolio, which it would give me great pleasure to read to my friends. In fact it was one of several which I had put on paper during the voyage. I generally took a couple of hours every day at my desk, and thus got ready several magazine articles, which I intended publishing on my return to England. I must own that for many years I have lived very comfortably on the produce of my pen, aided by my half-pay as a lieutenant. I need scarcely say, that Miss Mizen had not to press the matter. Having descended to my cabin, I returned with a paper I had just written. It was founded on a story the particulars of which I heard during our visit to Portugal.

THE GUERILLA'S LEAP; A TRUE TALE OF PORTUGAL.

A bright prospect opened for Portugal, when the blue and white banner of her young Queen was first unfurled on the shores of Mindello, for on that day was struck a noble blow for constitutional freedom, that freedom which can alone keep at bay the great enemies of mankind—bigotry and despotism. Alas!

that late events should have so belied the glorious promise of the past.

The sons of Lusitania were, however, doomed to suffer much before those times of fleeting prosperity could be attained, for that event was but the prelude to scenes of civil strife, famine, plague, horrors, and miseries of all kinds which long afflicted their lovely land, and with which, even now, some, by their insane machinations, seek again to curse their country.

The gallant Dom Pedro, the day after landing with his little band of heroes, entered Oporto in triumph, the forces of his usurping brother, Dom Miguel, having retreated at his approach; but the Miguelites soon collecting in great numbers, the Constitutionalists were besieged for many months in the city, exposed to a furious bombardment and a scarcity of provisions, added to which, the cholera broke out among the starving population, and carried off vast numbers of those whom famine and the shot and shells of their relentless foes had spared. Besides these accumulated miseries, the heroic city was continually exposed to the most desperate assaults of the Miguelite forces, urged on to conquest by promises of plunder and the most unrestrained license: yet, notwithstanding their vastly superior numbers to those of the defenders, each attack was successfully repulsed. At length, the

glorious victory of the fire-eating Napier; and the chivalrous exploit of Terceira compelled the besiegers to march southward for the defence of that part of the kingdom.

So closely was the city invested, that less than a quarter of a mile of sea-coast alone remained in the power of the Constitutionalists, exposed on each side to the shot and shell of the enemy, with a raging surf constantly breaking over the rocks which fringe it. On this small portion of beach, boats laden with provisions, supplied by a fleet of merchantmen anchored in the offing, continually landed their cargoes, though their crews at times suffered great loss from the cross fire of the Miguelites. However, their utmost efforts could not furnish sufficient food for the famishing people. By another means, also, a small quantity of provisions was from time to time thrown into the city. The flat-bottomed river-boats used on dark and stormy nights to glide noiselessly down the Douro to Oporto, and, under shelter of the lofty cliff, on which stands the Serra Convent, to disembark their cargoes unperceived and unmolested by the enemy posted on the southern bank of the stream. So successful, at length, were these expeditions, and of so much service were they to the besieged, that the Miguelite general becoming cognizant of them, bethought him of establishing

patrols along the banks of the river, and guard-boats on the water, to put a stop for the future to such practices.

Among the officers appointed to the command of these patrols was a Guerilla Chief, of the name of Gavião, who had assumed the title of Major. Gavião is the Portuguese for a hawk. Major Gavião fully supported the character of his name by pouncing on prey of every description within his reach, and the present occasion afforded him a rich harvest. His district extended from the river Tamega along the north bank of the Douro, as far as Oporto. His practice was to levy a toll on the boats high up the stream, then allowing them to continue their voyage, again to stop them lower down, and to compel them to pay a second time. On occasions, he would even seize the whole cargo, if the crews attempted to grumble at this treatment, and of course the unfortunate people had no redress, as in so doing he was only performing his duty, sanctioned by his superiors. He was neglecting his orders when he allowed them to pass. Such conduct was sufficient of itself to gain him the most dire hatred of the peasantry through every part of the country infested by his presence; he was, besides, savage and revengeful, and passionate in the extreme, and was suspected of having committed

more than one murder with his own hand. His appearance did not belie his general character. His figure was rather above the usual height of his countrymen, his visage swarthy, with a quantity of hair, dark as the raven's wing, surrounding it; his eyes were deep set and black, gleaming malignantly forth like a baneful light in some damp cavern, while his features, though regular, wore with every change an expression of evil.

Such is the no very flattering description we received of the Guerilla Chief—the hero of our tale. In other times he would have been a bandit; in other lands a highwayman, a housebreaker, or a bubble railroad projector. Nature made him a villain—circumstances, what he was.

It was midnight! The sky was overcast with thick clouds, so that neither moon nor stars shed their light upon the world, with scarcely a breath of wind to ruffle the surface of the water, as a boat glided slowly down the stream of the majestic and wealth-bearing Douro.

We must take the liberty of authors and lift the shroud of darkness which then enveloped the world, to describe the boat and her crew to our readers.

She was of a construction precisely similar to what has existed since the early days of the Lusitanian

monarchy; if not from a far earlier date, having flat floors, with wall sides and being composed of rough deal planks, low at the stern, and rising slightly forward to a long projecting bow. The cargo of the boat consisted chiefly of chestnuts in heaps, and sacks of corn, with baskets full of large loaves of yellow bread composed of Indian corn. Fuel being scarce in the city, baked bread was of more value. The rudder was a long beam, with a plank shaped like the tail of a fish at the end. The helmsman stood on a high platform to enable him to see to some distance ahead, and to give him greater power over the unwieldy tiller. He was a young man of slight and symmetrical form, every attitude he assumed in his occupation being full of grace and expressive of vigour. His costume was simple in the extreme, though highly picturesque. On his head he wore a red cloth cap falling in a peak on one side, a loose jacket of dark cloth over a white shirt, and a pair of large white trousers, scarcely reaching to the knee, and fastened round the waist by a red sash, completed his costume, his well-bronzed and sinewy legs and feet being free of any covering. Four other men similarly habited, pulled two broad-bladed, double-banked oars forward, standing up all the time with their faces to the bows, while a youth, kneeling at the very extreme point of the

long bow, kept a watchful look out into the darkness to give the earliest possible notice of any danger they might approach. Now they would steer under some lofty rock, whose rugged sides no human being could climb; then, when the course of the river widened, and the banks became low, they would keep a middle course to avoid any enemy lurking on either side.

They had proceeded thus in silence for some miles, and were then approaching the picturesquely situated village of Melros, embosomed in trees and surrounded by orchards and green fields. This place is some miles below the town of Entro-ambos-os-Rios, between the two rivers, so called from being situated on the fork of land formed by the junction of the river Tamega and the Douro. At this town commenced the district placed under the tender mercies of Gavião. The stream now becoming of considerable breadth the men at the oars commenced a conversation between themselves in a low whisper.

"The Holy Virgin preserve us; I hope we shall reach the city in safety," said one.

"Not if that ill-begotten Gavião, and his friend the diabo, have their way," answered another.

"We were well fleeced at Entre-ambos-os-Rios, and if they knew where to pitch upon us, depend upon it we should not escape them without another visit. The

night is dark, and we have come on bravely," said a third.

"Ah," observed the first, "but the diabo can fly farther than we can row, and see in the dark as well as in daylight."

"The good saints protect us!" ejaculated the four, crossing themselves.

Scarcely had they spoken, when a loud voice hailed from the shore, "*Quem vai la?*" ("Who goes there?") But the gallant helmsman did not alter his course.

"Row, my friends, row for your lives," he cried, in a singing whisper, loud enough to be heard by his companions in the fore part of the boat. They silently obeyed his orders.

The hail was repeated, and immediately a musket was fired from the shore at them, the ball whizzing over their heads.

"A boat coming up the river!" cried the lad in the bows, with a hurried, alarmed accent. They were the last words he spoke.

Again they were hailed from the shore, and a musket was seen to flash. A loud shriek accompanied the report. A splash was heard in the water, and a dark object floated by. The young helmsman leapt from the platform on which he stood, and struck out

for the body of the youth; ere he reached it, it had sunk below the surface. The oars were meanwhile backed, and the boat's way was stopped. The intrepid swimmer dived into the dark tide, guided less by sight than by instinct and fraternal love, for the youth was his brother. In a moment he rose again, with the body in his grasp, and was soon on board. With anguish he hung over the inanimate form, abandoning all thoughts of escaping his foes. He was aroused by the rough voices of the crew of the guard-boat ordering him to steer for the shore. Mechanically he obeyed, after placing his brother on some of the sacks of corn which formed part of his cargo. As the boat was made fast alongside the shore several armed men stepped on board with torches in their hands, one among them appearing to be their chief. The light fell on the features of the young Arraes, or Captain, of the boat, as he knelt over his brother's form, attempting to restore animation by rubbing his bosom and cold hands. With horror he started back, a ruddy stream issued from the boy's side, his own hands and clothes were stained with blood.

"Who did this?" he exclaimed, fiercely. "Ah!" Before him stood the dreaded and hated Gavião.

"The young rebel has met with his deserts," observed the Guerilla captain, sneeringly. "And

you, Antonio Lopez, you are an old offender. This is not the first time you have been taken attempting to carry provisions into that city held by those wretched Cartistas, and which will soon become the just reward of our valour. Tell them to take a last look at their money-chests and their wives and daughters; all will soon be ours."

Young Antonio folded his arms, answering the speaker with a look of scorn and hatred.

"Well, do you wish to be sent to prison or to be shot?" continued the other.

"You want gold, and you shall have it," were the first words the young Arraes spoke. "Blood you have had, and both shall be repaid," he muttered to himself. "Let me go, and part of the money shall be forthcoming; the rest shall be repaid on my return."

We have not before attempted to describe the scene. It was wild in the extreme. Lofty trees covered the bank to which the boat was made fast, and among them were tethered the horses of the Guerilla band, the light of the torches casting a lurid glare far into the recesses of the wood and over the smooth waters of the stream; while the armed men, in their various fantastic costumes, and the boatmen in their picturesque dresses, were thrown into strong relief against the dark background. Down the river arose lofty

and frowning rocks, between which, during the wintry floods, it rushes with impetuous force, whirling huge trunks of trees like straws before it.

The conference was soon ended, the money was paid, the guard-boat rowed up the river; the Arraes carrying the body of his murdered brother, proceeded on his voyage towards Oporto, and the Guerilla chief and his followers mounted their horses and galloped off. Gavião thought not of the vengeance he was gathering round his head.

On the southern bank of the Douro, some way above the town of Entre-ambos-os-Rios, stood a cottage, hidden, however, from the opposite shore by the trees which surrounded it. The sun, just about to dip behind the lofty hills which extend in numerous ridges towards Oporto, cast a ruddy glow upon the tranquil stream, and lighted up with its brilliant rays the inmost recesses of the surrounding pine-groves. Some shepherds were driving into the lower lands their flocks of sheep and goats, mingled together, from the rugged heights of the neighbouring serras, and the distant screeching sound of the cart-wheels, as they descended the rough ill-formed roads, struck not unpleasantly on the ear. Numerous birds chirped forth their evening song and prepared for roost, while myriads of winged insects filled the air with their suppressed murmur, as

they flitted forth from their hiding places. It was a lovely scene, such as only the balmy clime of the South can produce. Before the cottage door was a wide-spreading vine, forming a graceful arbour, from the roof and sides of which the luscious fruit hung suspended temptingly, in profuse clusters. Beneath its shade, on a low stool, sat a young girl, with distaff in hand, singing, as she spun, the evening hymn to the Holy Virgin.

Not only was the girl young, but very lovely; her beauty considerably heightened by her picturesque and graceful costume. She wore a broad-brimmed hat, set coquettishly on one side, beneath which, falling on each shoulder, appeared the ends of a snow-white handkerchief, and a profusion of dark, clustering curls; and when we say she possessed á pair of full sparkling black eyes and a fine clear complexion, slightly bronzed by the sun, our readers may picture to themselves the pretty Maria dos Campos. A dark blue cloth body, and a coloured cotton petticoat, formed the rest of her costume; the soles of her shoes being made of wood, and slipper fashion, kicked off at pleasure, her feet being destitute of any other covering. We must not forget the large flat ear-rings, of the purest gold, which she wore in her ears, nor the coils of heavy gold chains suspended round her neck.

Maria was in her gala costume, for what reason we shall presently see.

Suddenly her voice stopped, for the sound of footsteps fell upon her ear. She gazed forth with an anxious expression, but continued spinning, which she appeared to do mechanically, though she more than once bit in two the thread as she attempted to clear it of the knots she had formed.

A dark man, whose military costume and moustache proclaimed him a soldier, or at all events a Guerilla, was seen advancing along the rough pathway which led to the cottage. The girl blushed deeply as, after looking cautiously around to see that no one was observing him, he took her in his arms, and bestowed a kiss upon her brow, exclaiming, "Ah, my pretty Maria, I heard your voice as I landed from the other side of the river, and hastened hither to see you. Well, what news, my pretty one? Have the friends of the vile Constitutionalists been forming any fresh plots to attack the soldiers of our most gracious sovereign Dom Miguel?"

"Oh, I hear nothing now," answered the girl, in a tone of melancholy. "They do not trust me. They suspect me since—Oh, how long you have kept away!"

"Business, business! A soldier has not his time at

his own command, *minha menina*," answered the man, laughing.

"It was cruel in you, Senhor; but we girls are not like you men. When we love, we love with all our hearts; we give everything till nothing remains."

"Yes, you are tender chickens," said the soldier, in a contemptuous tone; but the girl did not understand him.

"Oh!" she suddenly exclaimed, clasping her hands and looking up into his face, "tell me, Senhor, when will you marry me, as you promised?"

"When! when, as I said, the vile Constitutionalists have been driven from the city of Oporto, and the place is given up to plunder; not before, I can promise you. Basta, don't ask me again."

The girl sank down into her seat with a sigh. As he uttered these words, a third person, who had overheard them, was added to the group. For some moments he stood, alternately regarding the other two, without speaking, although the convulsive grasp with which he held the handle of a long knife, stuck in a sheath in his waistband, showed that no gentle feelings were working in his bosom. The costume he wore, similar to one we have already described, announced that he was a simple boatman, although his dauntless bearing and stern air made him the superior of

the man he so boldly confronted. The Guerilla officer would evidently have gladly dispensed with his company, nor did he venture to meet his steadfast gaze. At last the young boatman could no longer contain his passion within bounds.

"So, Senhor Gavião," he exclaimed, "not content with robbing us of our money, you would seduce the affections of our maidens, and then leave them to reproach and misery by your false promises. You expect to revel in the plunder of the heroic city of Oporto, whose brave inhabitants defy the utmost efforts of your friends to conquer them. Never! Mark my words, that city you shall never enter alive, except perchance with a halter round your neck, and therefore never shall you marry that poor maiden."

"Fool, madman, idiot! These words shall cost you dear," cried Gavião, for it was the badly-celebrated Guerilla chief whom we have again introduced on the scene. He gnashed his teeth as he spoke.

"How dare you, a vile plebeian, address such words to me?" he continued. "Begone; or a prison awaits you!"

"Prisons were not built for the free," answered the young boatman, boldly. "I speak thus, because I fear you not. What greater harm can you do me than you have already done? You have robbed me

of my money, but for that I pardon you. You murdered my brother, and for that I will be avenged, ay, and amply too; and now you are seeking to rob me of my mistress. A day of heavy reckoning will come, and that soon."

"Audacious fool, you have brought your fate upon your head!" exclaimed the Guerilla chief, drawing a pistol from his belt, and levelling it at the bosom of the young boatman; but as he did so, Maria, who had been watching every motion with intense anxiety, sprang forward, and drew back his arm.

A report was heard, the smoke cleared away, and the young boatman stood uninjured, holding in his upraised hand his glittering knife. With a fierce ejaculation he threw himself upon his enemy, and the next moment would have been the Guerilla's last, had not Maria rushed before him.

"Hold, Antonio, hold!" she cried; "I have saved your life; spare his."

The young man hesitated, and, with a deep-drawn sigh, the hand which grasped the deadly weapon sank by his side. The Guerilla seized the moment to draw forth his second pistol, and had it not been for Maria's vigilance he would have succeeded in killing his rival. As it was, the ball grazed the right arm of the youth, whose just revenge Maria could

scarcely have restrained, had not at the same moment an armed party been seen hurrying up the bank from the river.

"Haste, haste, and secure this rebel," exclaimed the Guerilla, as soon as he observed them, but he did not attempt to seize the youth himself. "Shoot him —shoot him!" he cried, as the latter began to move.

The young boatman cast a glance of defiance at his opponents, and one of agonized regret at the girl, and then bounded like a chamois up the hill, and was lost to sight among the surrounding trees. Urged on by their chief, the Guerillas pursued for some way, shouting to each other, and firing off their muskets and carbines as they caught a glimpse of the chase. The poor girl in the mean time sank down on the ground, and hiding her face in her hands, burst into tears.

She was aroused by the voice of the Guerilla; a sigh escaped her bosom, as if her heart was relieved, as she saw that Antonio was at all events not in the hands of his followers.

"Adieu, my pretty Maria," he said, taking her unresisting hand, though she returned not the pressure. "I must be on the other side of the water attending to my affairs; but, in the mean time, you will be no more annoyed by that fellow."

"What!" exclaimed Maria, vehemently. "Cruel man, you have not killed him?"

"*Bastante!* He is food for the fishes of the river," answered Gavião, with a scornful laugh, as he moved away with his ruffian followers.

Maria wrung her hands, and wept with bitter anguish. "Ah me, and I have killed him!" she cried.

Verily, woman is a strange compound—tender, loving, changeable, full of pity, proud, ambitious, cruel, partaking much of the nature of angels, with some sparks of their antagonistic principle. At that moment her heart dwelt more with her humble admirer than with her proud and powerful lover; and had Antonio again appeared, gladly would she have welcomed him with open arms, and unasked have promised to discard for ever his rival.

In the mean time the Guerilla officer entered a boat with some of his followers. A considerable number he ordered to remain during the night in the neighbourhood, while he proceeded down the river. After rowing for some time, with a strong breeze against them, the boatmen ran alongside the northern bank, a short distance above the Tamega. At this spot, mostly surrounded by trees, arises a lofty and rugged rock, on the summit of which stands the once sacred

walls of a convent. The site was selected by the Moors for a fortress, which must have been of great strength; from its overhanging the river, it was by them denominated Al Pendurada, which appellation it retains to the present day. On the expulsion of the infidels from that part of the country to more southern provinces, the edifice was converted by some Benedictine friars into a domicile for their order, and in their possession it had ever after remained to the time of which we write, retaining much of the gloomy grandeur of its former character. Now, what a change has come over the scene! Both Moors and monks have disappeared; and in their place the bat flaps its wings, the ill-omened owl shrieks forth its midnight cries, and the prowling wolf thither seeks his abode,—no unfit representatives of its late inhabitants, if the tales told of them in the neighbourhood bear any resemblance to the truth. Little more than twelve years have worked this change. What events will the coming like period bring forth? Shall we see the monks restored to their former abodes and unbridled power? Shall we see tyranny, bigotry, and their attendant vices rampant in Lusitania, as of yore? or has truly a happier period commenced? We are no prophets, but we consult the past, we examine the present, and tremble.

We have been led away from our tale. The scenery surrounding the rock is very beautiful, but Gavião paid no attention to it as he hurried on towards the convent, and climbing the steep acclivity rang at the entrance gate. He was received by an aged porter, the rueful expression of whose countenance made him ask hastily if any news had arrived from the seat of war.

The old man had scarcely time to answer, when several friars, mostly aged and infirm, came hobbling forth to meet him.

"What news is this I hear, Padre Bernado?" he asked, fiercely. "Can it be true?"

"Too true, my son," said the old man, shaking his head mournfully. "Lisbon is in the hands of the enemy, the fleet of his Majesty, Dom Miguel, has been taken, his army is hard pressed, and the garrison of Oporto are making sorties in all directions; but what is more, the peasantry have risen in many districts and declared in favour of the Constitution."

This information made the heart of the Miguelite sink within him, nor for some time did his bearing regain his usual audacity till revived by the good cheer and ruby wine which the monks set before him. Even some of the brethren bore marks of the fierce contest which had been for so long raging in the land,

in the shape of bullet and sabre wounds, the younger and bolder ones having gone forth with weapons and crucifixes in their hands to lead on the supporters of absolutism against those daring reformers, who had sworn to overthrow their order, and establish freedom and a pure faith in the land.

The copious draughts of wine they imbibed at length raised the spirits of the party, and they began to look forward to the speedy recovery of their lost ground; racy stories were told, anecdotes, to which the ear of modesty could not listen, and wild adventures, such as holy friars are not supposed to encounter. Shouts of laughter echoed through the old vaulted hall, till the carouse grew fast and loud. Gavião was relating one of his savage exploits, when a lay-brother rushed hurriedly into the chamber, pale and agitated. His appearance quickly silenced the jests of the revellers, ready enough to be alarmed at any unusual circumstance, their mirth being more forced than real.

"What is the matter?" said the Prior, an old man, who had been raised to the post more on account of his easy temper than any other necessary qualification. "Tell us, man, what alarms you."

"Why, Senhor Prior, as I came through the hamlet, I stopped at a venda where a number of men were

collected, who asserted that his Majesty, Dom Miguel, would be expelled the country, and were vowing vengeance against all who supported him."

"That is very likely," said the Prior, puffing out his breath much relieved. "We know that this is said. What of that?"

"Nothing, Senhor Prior, nothing; but that is not all. They declared that one of their greatest oppressors has taken shelter within these walls, and that if he is not delivered up to them when they demand him to-morrow morning, they will pull the convent about our ears, and turn all the brethren into the woods, to feed like swine upon chestnuts."

"Oh, the sacrilegious wretches!" cried the Prior and several of the monks in chorus. "What shall we do? What shall we do?"

"Do! holy fathers, do!" exclaimed Gavião, with scorn in his tone. "Do! why shut the gates and defy the threats of the scoundrels."

"Impossible, my son. They would tear the gates off their hinges, and break down the walls," said the Prior, in a trembling voice. "You must go forth by dawn to-morrow morning, and fly for safety to some other place. We will offer up prayers for your escape."

The monks were unanimous in their decision, for

they well knew how the convents in the Azores and in the neighbourhood of Oporto had been treated, and they had no wish to provoke the vengeance of the peasantry on their own heads.

"As you determine on it, I will depart," exclaimed Gavião, hastily, rising from his seat; "but remember, holy fathers, if I fall, my death will be on your head."

"Paciencia!" said the Prior, shrugging his shoulders; "we will pray for you."

The Guerilla Chief spent the first part of the night in seeing that his accoutrements were in good order, that his steed was well shod and fed, and also, that the horses of two of his followers were well prepared for a forced journey. He then threw himself to rest for a few hours in the vacant cell of one of the monks. Long before dawn, summoning his two attendants, he descended to the court yard, where in gloomy silence and alarm they saddled and bridled their steeds, cursing in their hearts the selfish cowardice of the monks, who were thus inhospitably dismissing them. A small postern-gate, which led to a narrow path concealed among trees and rocks, down the hill, being opened by one of the monks, who gave them his benediction, they silently emerged from the sheltering walls of the convent. The charger Gavião rode was of the Anda-

lusian breed, strong and active, and from its jet-black hue and extraordinary performances, believed fully by the ignorant peasantry he had maltreated, to have been the especial gift of the Evil One.

With cautious steps the three men picked their way in single file down the steep and rugged path, the loose stones rolling every instant from beneath their horses' hoofs—the tramp of their steeds awaking the dead silence of night. At length they reached the more level ground, Gavião directing his course to the east, and selecting the least frequented paths along the banks of the river. Not a word did they venture to utter, as they pushed on at as fast a rate as the uneven nature of the country would allow. Sometimes they would draw rein to listen, fancying they had heard the sound of human voices, but their imagination had deceived them. Then they would endeavour to make up for lost time, by spurring on their steeds over the rough stones and deep ruts in their path. The aim of the Guerilla Chief was to ride along the banks of the river till he could arrive opposite the spot on the southern side, where a considerable number of his followers were assembled, and where he hoped to engage a boat to ferry him across, not daring to trust to those he might find lower down, as he felt fully conscious of the deep hatred with

which he was regarded by all the boatmen on the Douro. Onward they rode, the two followers equally alarmed with their Captain. Every time the hoofs of their horses struck against a stone, they fancied the sound the click of a carbine or pistol; or as the boughs of the trees rubbed together, moved by the breeze, they expected some one to be preparing to rush out upon them. They felt, in truth, like criminals escaping from justice, and they knew that they were surrounded by foes their own tyranny had created. At last, the faint streaks of dawn appeared in the eastern sky, and object after object became more clearly defined; still no enemy had appeared.

"We shall yet escape the villains," said Gavião as they toiled up a steep hill near the spot where he intended to cross the river.

As they reached the summit, the sun rose with unobscured splendour behind the lofty ridges of the Maraõ, their own figures being clearly defined against the brightening sky. At the same moment a shout swelled up from the vale they had just quitted, when turning his head, Gavião beheld to his dismay, advancing towards him, a large party of armed men, who, by their gestures, he conceived were not likely to be very friendly disposed towards him. Giving one more glance to ascertain their numbers and distance,

he plunged his spurs into his courser's sides, ordering his Guerillas to defend the road till he could effect his escape.

At this desperate juncture his authority was disregarded, for the men, instead of obeying his commands, dashed after him down the steep declivity, and then discovering a path leading on one side, fled for their lives into the interior of the country, leaving him exposed to the fury of his enemies. Finding himself deserted, Gavião uttered a curse on the dastardly conduct of his men, but he had still hopes of escape. As his pursuers arrived at the summit of the hill, he had reached the bank of the river, and as he continued his course, he waved his hand, and shouted loudly to summon some of his band to ferry over a boat from the opposite shore. The signal was unobserved and his voice unheard. His pursuers, vowing vengeance on his head, rushed down the hill, led on by a young man of athletic form, carrying a rifle in his hand, and habited in the light dress of a boatman. It was truly a race of life and death. Gavião full well knew his danger, and his gallant steed seemed to share his rider's feelings. Unhesitatingly he galloped over the roughest ground, clearing at a bound deep chasms worn by the winter's torrent, ploughing up the soft sand, and scattering far and wide the loose shingles in

his course. The peasants and their leader, with unabated speed, were advancing towards him; they well knew that no boat would cross to bear him from them; they felt sure that their prey was within their grasp. Anxiously he scanned the opposite shore, but no bark was moving. He turned his head and beheld in advance of his companions the figure of the young boatman. It was one he could not mistake,—one whose bitter vengeance he had so often provoked,—the Arraes Antonio. The sight added fresh wings to his speed. He no longer hesitated what course to pursue; at every risk he must swim his steed across the stream. Before him lay a vast expanse, formed of ledges of the roughest rocks, extending so far into the river that its course was reduced to half its original breadth. From the scarcity of water, however, the current not being very rapid, he might hope easily to pass it, could he once reach the stream; yet it seemed impossible that any animal less active than the wild chamois could keep its feet upon that rugged ground, but Gavião knew the powers of his steed. Plunging his spurs into the bleeding flanks of the animal, he turned him towards the rocks. His pursuers simultaneously raised a shout of surprise as they watched his course.* Antonio was climbing a rock in advance of

* The story was told me while visiting the spot; but had not my informant been present at Gavião's death, I could not have believed

the rest; twice he had raised his rifle to fire, but felt uncertain of his aim. From ledge to ledge leapt the gallant black steed, faltering not in his course. One deep chasm, through which the water rushed wildly, alone remained to be passed; the spurs were pressed to his flanks, and he cleared it at a bound; one more spring, and he would be breasting the current. Several persons at the same time were seen hurrying down the opposite bank, and among them was a female figure, who, by her gestures, seemed urging the men to launch a boat into the stream, to carry succour to the fugitive. At that moment Antonio raised his unerring rifle,—the report echoed among the surrounding heights; a loud shriek was heard; the black steed plunged forward, and was seen bravely stemming the tide, but his rider was not there. A dark object for a moment rose to the surface, and was hurried down the foaming stream. His dark courser reached the opposite shore in safety, but the body of the Guerilla Captain was never found.

The unhappy Maria watched the dreadful catas-

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it possible that a mortal steed could have passed over the wild sea of rocks I have described. Gavião Pessoa was a man of old family belonging to Amarante. When the Constitutionalists advanced, after the siege of Oporto was raised, they spared the residences of the Miguelites who had treated their friends with kindness while in their power; but they invariably destroyed the property of those who had behaved with cruelty and tyranny.

trophe from the opposite shore. Had the fierce Guerilla returned to her with his usual haughty bearing she would have spurned him from her feet; as a fugitive for life, she was prepared to shelter and save him, though love had vanished for ever from her bosom. Such is woman! As she beheld the fatal shot take effect, and the murdered officer spring from his coal-black steed, ere he disappeared for ever beneath the foaming tide, she sank fainting to the ground.

On the death of their chief the remnant of his followers dispersed in every direction, to avoid the vengeance of the Constitutionalists. Maria dos Campos remained alone, for no one of her own family had accompanied her, when at the early dawn she had quitted her couch to wander by the river's side. She was recalled to her senses by a voice pronouncing her name in a tone of tender endearment. She opened her eyes, and beheld the young Arraes Antonio bending over her.

"What dreadful thing has occurred?" she exclaimed, in a feeble voice; "ay, I know,—they told me you were dead. Oh, do not, do not spurn me, Antonio."

"Spurn you, dearest! My love is unchangeable. I have slain your enemy and mine, and the Charter is victorious. 'Viva! viva la Constituição.'"

CHAPTER XII.

A CALM. — DANGERS OF THE AFRICAN COAST. — UNPLEASANT CUSTOMERS.—ALL HANDS READY FOR THE FIGHT. — THE BATTLE BEGINS.—HEARTY WOUNDED. —OUR PERILOUS CONDITION.—HEROISM OF OUR HEROINES.—A FRIEND IN OUR NEED.

EVENING was about to throw its dusky veil over the African shores by the time that the story was concluded. The idle flap of the mainsail showed us that there was a stark calm. A fish would occasionally leap out of the water, or the fin of some monster of the deep might be seen as it swam by in pursuit of prey; or a sea-bird would come swooping past to ascertain what strange craft had ventured into its haunts, ere it winged its way back to its roosting-place for the night, amid the crags of the neighbouring headlands.

After I had finished my story, I took a turn on the deck, as Bubble would have said, to hide the blushes which the praise bestowed on it were raising on my

cheek. Whether or not the blushes were there, matters little; I only know that as I looked over the side and measured our distance from the land, it appeared to me that, although the calm was so complete, we had considerably decreased our distance with it. Walking forward, I asked Snow if he had remarked anything particular.

"Why yes, sir; I was just going to speak to you or Mr. Porpoise, about the matter," he answered. "I've been watching the land for an hour or more past, and it strikes me that there is a strong current, which sets inshore to the westward hereabouts; it's just the sort of thing which, if we hadn't found out in time, might have carried us much too close in on a dark night to be pleasant; as it is, if a breeze doesn't spring up, and we continue to drift in, we must just get the boats out and tow her head off shore, so there'll be no great harm come of that."

"You are right," said I; "there's little doubt about it; I'll mention the matter to Mr. Porpoise, and he'll approve of what you propose. But I do not think there's any use in letting the ladies know, or they'll be fancying all sorts of dreadful things—that they are going to be cast on shore, or eaten up by lions, or murdered by savages. I should not like to give them any uneasiness which can be helped."

I watched the old man's countenance while I was speaking, to ascertain what he really thought about the matter. The truth was that I was not quite satisfied myself with our position. I had been along that coast some years before, looking into several of the ports; and I remembered that the Moors inhabiting the villages just about there, bore anything but a good character. I began to blame myself, when too late, for not having thought of this before. When the brig-of-war was with us it mattered little, for no pirates would have ventured to come out to attack her; they would have known that she would have proved a dear bargain, even if they could ultimately have taken her, and very little value to them if taken, but with a yacht the case was different. We could not fail to appear a tempting prize, and easily won. Had we, however, been without ladies on board, we should, I expect, all have enjoyed the fun of showing the rascals that they had caught a Tartar, and am fully certain that we should have been able to render a good account of them.

I remember that these ideas crossed my mind as I walked the deck, waiting for an opportunity of speaking to Porpoise, who was still engaged in conversation with Mrs. Mizen; then I burst into a fit of laughter at the thought of the ideal enemy I had

so busily conjured up to fight with. Porpoise, who just then joined me, inquired the cause of my merriment.

"It suddenly occurred to me that we were off a somewhat ill-famed part of the coast, and I could not help fancying I saw half a dozen or more piratical row-boats come stealing out from under the cliffs there, with the intention of cutting our throats and rifling the vessel," I answered; "but of course it is a mere fancy. I never heard of an English yacht being attacked by pirates hereabouts, and it would be folly to make ourselves anxious about such a bugbear."

Now even while I was saying this I was not altogether satisfied in my own mind about the matter. If, as I before said, we had had only men on board, we might have fought to the last, and could only then have been killed, but should we be overpowered, the fate of the women committed to our charge would be too horrible to contemplate.

"I'm glad that you think there is no cause for apprehension," said I to Porpoise; "still it might be as well to keep a sharp look out during the night, and should a breeze spring up, to give the coast a more respectful offing."

"I'll do that same," he answered; "I feel no inclination to turn in myself, so that should any of the

natives of whom you are suspicious be inclined to visit us, they may not find us altogether unprepared."

The ladies soon after this retired to their cabin, and we only then had an opportunity of mentioning the subject to Hearty. He rather laughed at the notion, but begged that he might be called when the fighting began. After taking a few turns on deck, he also turned in, and Porpoise was left in charge of the deck. I, after a little time, went to my cabin; it seemed too ridiculous to lose my night's rest for the sake of an idea. I had slept about a couple of hours when I awoke by hearing the sound of Porpoise's voice. He was standing directly over my skylight, which, on account of the heat of the weather, was kept off.

"Can you make anything out, Snow?" he asked.

"I think I can now, sir. It seems to me that there are four or five dark spots on the water, just clear of the shadow of that headland in there," was the answer. "I can't just make out what they are for certain."

I was on deck in a few seconds with my night-glass at my eye pointed in the direction indicated.

"What think you of their being row-boats?" said I. "They look wonderfully like them."

"I can't say that they are not," answered the old

man. "They may be rocks just showing their heads above water. But what, if they are boats, can they be doing out there at this time of night?"

"Coming to pay us a visit perhaps," I remarked. "We really should be prepared in case of accidents, Porpoise. By timely preparations we averted danger, once before, when otherwise, in all probability we should have had our throats cut. Do not let us be less wise on this occasion."

"Certainly not," said Porpoise; "and as discretion is the better part of valour, we will try and tow the cutter off shore; it will prolong the time till our visitors can overtake us, and will give us a better chance of having a breeze spring up; if we get that we shall be able to laugh at any number of such fellows. They are only formidable when they can find a vessel becalmed; after all.I don't say that those are pirates, and if it were not for the ladies on board, we would very quickly learn the truth of the case."

The thorough John Bull spoke out in these remarks. Porpoise did not at all like the idea of flying from an enemy under any circumstances, and as he had to do it he wished to find every possible reason for so doing.

"Turn the hands up and get the boats out, Snow; we'll see what towing will do," he continued. "You

see that this current is setting us far too much inshore, and, at all events, it is necessary to get a better offing before daybreak, lest no breeze should spring up in the morning to carry us back to the spot where Rullock was to find us."

Three boats were got into the water and manned forthwith; Porpoise, Hearty, Snow, and I, being the only people remaining on board. The crews gave way with a will, and the cutter soon began to slip through the water; she went along, probably, faster than the current was carrying her in an opposite direction. These arrangements being made, I took another scrutiny of the suspicious objects under the land. I had no longer any doubt in my mind that they were boats, and that they were pulling out to sea towards us. It was now time to call up Hearty. We had seen no necessity before this of making him unnecessarily anxious, and the noise of lowering the boats had not roused him; indeed, he would have slept through a hurricane, or while a dozen broadsides were being fired, I verily believe, if not called. He was brisk enough, however, when once roused up. As I expected, he was very anxious at the state of affairs.

"We were thoughtless and unwise to stand in so close to this shore," he remarked; "Brine, my friend,

we must sink the cutter or blow her up rather than yield to those villains!"

He spoke with much emotion, and I could sincerely enter into his feelings. He did not utter a word of complaint against Porpoise or me, though I think he might have had some reason in blaming us for allowing the cutter to get into her present condition. He paced the deck with hurried steps, looking every now and then anxiously through the glass towards the objects we had observed, and then he would hail the boats.

"Give way, my lads—give way," he shouted; "if any one knocks up, I'll take his place."

Again he looked through the glass.

"Can they be rocks?" he exclaimed; "I see no alteration in their appearance."

"I do, though, I am sorry to say," I answered. "They have got considerably more out of the shade of the land since I first saw them."

This became very evident after some time; nor could Hearty any longer doubt the fact. I counted five of them, largish boats (I suspected), each pulling some twenty oars or more, probably double-banked. Very likely each boat carried not much fewer than sixty men—fearful odds for the 'Frolic' to contend with. The 'Zebra' would not have found

them altogether contemptible antagonists, if, as I said, my suspicions were correct as to their size. Still, I hoped that I might be mistaken; we could not be certain as to their object. They might be mere fishing-boats magnified by the obscurity, or coasters which had pulled out in the expectation of getting a breeze in the morning to carry them alongshore, or to get into some current which might set in the direction in which they wished to go. All these ideas I suggested to Hearty; still, my original notion outweighed all others in my mind. Indeed I have always found it wisest to take the point of view which requires most caution; precautions can, at the worst, only give a little trouble; the neglect of them may bring ruin and misery. On this principle I was most anxious to get as far as possible from the shore. No one was idle. Happily the ladies slept on, so that we had not the additional pain at feeling that they were left in a state of anxiety. Porpoise took the helm; Snow went forward to direct the boats how to pull, while Hearty and I busied ourselves in getting out the arms, arranging the ammunition, loading the guns, and muskets, and pistols; indeed, in making every preparation for a desperate struggle. The boats came on very warily; I suspected that we had been seen in the afternoon from the shore, and that as we appeared

a tempting prize, the expedition had been planned to capture us.

"A very short time longer will settle the question," said I to Hearty. "We must endeavour to keep them at a respectful distance as long as we can; should they once get alongside they would overpower us with their numbers. Happily these sort of gentry are as great cowards as they are scoundrels, and a firm front is certain to make them consider whether the profit is likely to be worth the risk of a battle."

I have gone through a good many anxious moments in the course of my life, but never did I feel more apprehension for the result of an adventure than I did for that in which we were at present engaged. A waning moon had now risen, and showed us very clearly the number and character of the strangers,—whether friends or foes, was hereafter to be decided. Another look at them through my night-glass showed me that they were large boats, as I had suspected, and full of men.

"There is little use in making any further efforts to escape," said I to Hearty; "I would hoist in the boats and serve out some grog to the men. They want something after their exertions, though they do not require Dutch courage to defend the ship."

Porpoise agreed to my suggestion; they were im-

mediately put into execution. The men threw off their grog as coolly as if they had been about to sail a match at a regatta, instead of being about to engage in deadly fight.

"Here's to your health, Mr. Hearty, and gentlemen all, and may we just give those scoundrels out there a thorough good drubbing if they attempt to attack us," quoth Snow, in the name of his shipmates.

"Thank you—thank you, my men," answered Hearty; "you'll act like true-hearted Englishmen, and what men can do you'll do, I know, to protect the helpless women we have on board. I won't make you a long speech, you don't want that to rouse your courage, but I do ask you not to yield while one man of us remains alive on deck."

"That's just what we are resolved to do, Mr. Hearty; no fear, sir," answered all hands, and they would have cheered lustily had I not restrained them for two reasons: I was unwilling to awaken the ladies sooner than was necessary, and also should the pirates have expected to surprise us, it would be a great advantage if we, on the contrary, should be able to surprise them. I mentioned this latter idea to my companions, and they immediately entered into it. The Moors had been too far off to allow them to perceive us hoisting in the boats, so they could not

tell but that we were all fast asleep on board. Accordingly, the guns were loaded up to the muzzles with langrage and musket-balls; pistols and cutlasses were served out to the men, and it was encouraging to see their pleased manner as they stuck the one into their belts, and buckled the other round their waists. Some had, in addition, muskets, and a reserve of small-arms was placed amidships to be resorted to in case of necessity. The men then went and lay down so as to be effectually concealed under the bulwarks: Porpoise and I only walked the deck, as if we were the ordinary watch, and we agreed to pretend to be looking seaward when the boats drew near, as if unconscious of their approach. Meantime Hearty went below to perform the painful task of informing the ladies of our dangerous position. He did it with his usual tact.

"Mrs. Mizen," I heard him say, "I must beg you and Miss Mizen to dress, but not to come on deck. We have got too close in-shore, and some Moorish boats appear to be coming off to us; they may not mean to do us any mischief, but it is as well to be prepared, and we do not intend to allow them to come too near us."

There was a short pause. I heard no exclamations of surprise or terror—no cries, or lamentations, or

forebodings of evil, but Mrs. Mizen simply answered in a firm voice:

"We trust, then, Mr. Hearty, to you and your companions to defend us, and may a merciful God give you strength to fight and beat off our assailants!"

"That's a speech worthy of a true heroine," exclaimed Porpoise, who had likewise overheard it. "Just the thing to strengthen our nerves, and to put true courage into us. I trust, Mrs. Mizen, we shall not be long in beating off the pirates," he added, looking down the skylight; "do you, in the mean time, keep snug below, and don't mind the uproar."

"Now, my lads, be ready; we mustn't let the blackguards get on board to frighten the ladies, mind that. When I give the word, be up and at them."

Porpoise having thus delivered himself, in accordance with our plan, pretended to be intently looking over the tafferel. The row-boats were all the time drawing disagreeably near, and I had no longer in my mind any doubt as to their character and intention. We, also, were anxiously looking out for a breeze which might enable us to meet them at greater advantage. I took a glance at the compass; as I did so I felt a light breeze fan my cheek: it came from the westward. The cutter's head was at that time tending

in shore, for as soon as the boats had been hoisted in she had again lost all steerage-way, and had gradually gone round. Again the puff of air came stronger, and she gathered sufficient steerage-way to enable us to wear round just before the boats reached us. The pirates must have thought that we were very blind not to perceive them. Silently they pulled towards us in two columns: we let them approach within a quarter of a cable's length. Just as a tiger springs on his prey they pulled on rapidly towards us, evidently expecting to catch us unprepared.

"Now, my lads, up and at them!" sung out Porpoise, in imitation of the speech of a somewhat better-known hero.

Our jolly yachtsmen did not require a second summons. Up they sprang to their allotted duties.

"Steady!" added Porpoise, "take aim before you fire. Those forward aim at the headmost boats; let the after guns give account of those coming up next astern. Now give it them."

The orders were comprehended, and executed promptly and well. Cries and groans and shouts from the row-boats followed the simultaneous discharge from our great-guns and small-arms. The pirates ceased rowing, and a second intervened before they fired in return, but their shot generally flew wide of

us, our unexpected commencement of the action having evidently thrown them into not a little confusion. For an instant it occurred to me that we might have been too precipitate, and that perhaps after all they might not have been pirates, but for some reason or other had come off to us at that unseasonable hour. It was therefore, in one respect, a positive relief to me when they began to fire, and I discovered their real character. Still undaunted, on they came. Before, however, they could get alongside, our people had time to load again and fire; this time not a shot but took effect. The Moors did not relish the dose; some attempted to spring on board, but were driven back by pike and cutlass into the sea, Hearty setting the example of activity and courage by rushing here and there, cutting, and thrusting, and slashing away, so that he did the work of half a dozen men. Indeed I may say the same without vanity of all on board, or we could not have contended for a minute against the fearful odds opposed to us. The low deck of a yacht, it must be remembered, does not present the difficulties to assailants which even a brig-of-war or an ordinary high-sided merchantman is capable of doing. Ours was literally a hand-to-hand fight without the slightest protection, our slight bulwarks alone separating us from our enemies when they once got alongside.

Happily the breeze increased, and giving us way through the water, the Moorish boats having failed to hook on to us, we once more slipped through them. Some of the men in the bows continued firing at us, but a little delay occurred before the rest could get out their oars to follow the cutter. The chiefs of each boat appeared to be holding a consultation, and I only hoped that they would come to the decision that the grapes were sour, or rather that the game was not worth the candle to play it by, as the Frenchmen say, and give up the pursuit. But they were not so reasonable; they probably thought that if we fought so desperately we had something on board worth fighting for; not considering that our lives and liberties were of very much consequence, and so they showed a resolution once more to attempt to overhaul us. This hesitation was much to our advantage, as it enabled us once more to load our guns up to the muzzles, and to take a steady aim as they came up. In all my fighting experience I have come to the conclusion that there is no system equal to that of waiting for a good opportunity, mustering all resources, and then, once having begun the attack, to continue at the work without relaxing a moment till the day is won. The Moorish pirates did not follow this course. At last came the tug of war. Their fury and thirst for

vengeance was now added to their greed for plunder, and the boats ranged up on either side of the little 'Frolic' with seemingly a full determination on the part of their crews to overpower us at once.

"Steady, my good lads, steady," shouted Porpoise. "Remember, fire as before, and then load again as fast as you can."

Off went our guns with good effect; while Hearty and I and three or four others, armed with muskets, blazed away with them, taking up one after the other as fast as the steward could load them. The report of the guns must have been heard on shore and far out to sea over that calm water, while the bright flashes lighted up the midnight air. Musket-balls and round shot don't often fly about without doing some damage; and while ours were telling pretty well among the thickly crowded boats of the Moors, we were not altogether free from harm. Two of our people had been wounded. One of them fell to the deck; and, from the way the poor fellow groaned, I was much afraid that he was mortally hurt. I drew him close to the companion-hatch, that he might, in a slight degree, be protected from further injury; but we were too hard pressed to spare anyone for a moment from the deck to take him below. Hearty was passing close to me, when, by the flash of the guns, I saw him

give a sudden, convulsive movement with his left arm. I felt sure he was hit. I asked him.

"Oh nothing, nothing," he answered. "Don't say a word about it. I can fight away just as well as ever; and that is all I care about just now."

One of our chief efforts was to prevent the Moorish boats from hooking on to us. This they frequently attempted to do; and each time the lashings they tried to secure were cut adrift. I was indeed surprised to find them so pertinacious in their attack, for a resolute resistance at the commencement will generally compel those sort of gentry to give up an enterprise, unless they are certain a great deal is to be gained by it.

The breeze was now increasing, and old Snow stood at the helm, with his left hand on the tiller, and his right hand wielding a cutlass, with which, aided by another man, he kept at bay any of the Moors who attempted to climb on board over the stern. Still, so overmatched were we by numbers, that I felt even then, in spite of our determined resistance, that the result was very doubtful. I almost sickened at the thought; but I was very certain that before such a sad consummation should occur, not a man of us would be left alive on the deck.

"And then, should the day be evidently going

against us, should no help remain—not a shadow of hope—would it be right to blow up the vessel, and preserve those innocent ones below from an ignominious slavery,—from a worse than death?"

"Impious man," responded a voice within me. "Think not to rule the providences of thy Creator. Do not evil that good may come of it. Who can tell what means he has in store, even at the very last moment, to preserve those whom, in his infinite wisdom, he has resolved to preserve?"

I felt the frailty of human thoughts and human intentions, and banished the terrible idea from my mind. Still I could not feel but that our case, to outward appearance, was very desperate. Porpoise himself was wounded, I found, though the pain he suffered did not allow him for a moment to relax in his defence of the vessel. His voice was heard everywhere as loud and cheering as before, encouraging our crew to persevere.

Once more the pirates drew off.

"Huzza! huzza!" shouted all hands. "They have had enough of it."

But no.

"Load your guns, load your guns!" shouted Porpoise. "Don't trust to them."

It was fortunate this was done. With terrific cries

and yells they for a third time gave way towards us, completely hemming us in, so that some boats going ahead almost stopped the vessel's way through the water. Keeping up their hideous yells, firing their pistols, and flourishing their scymeters, they flung themselves headlong on board. Many were driven back, but their places were speedily filled by others. The physical power of the cutter's crew, exerted so long to the utmost stretch, was almost failing, when, far in the offing, to the northward, the bright flash of a gun was seen, followed shortly afterwards by another and another. I pointed them out to Hearty.

"There's help coming, my lads!" he shouted. "Never fear; but let's have all the glory of the fight to ourselves, and drive these scoundrels off before it arrives. Huzza! huzza! Back with them. No quarter. Cut them down. Drive them into the sea."

All this time he was most completely suiting the action to his words. At last some of the pirates saw the flashes.

The morning light was just breaking in the east, for the action had endured far longer than it has taken to describe it. They must have suspected that they foreboded no good to them, and that the sooner they were off the better. Orders were shouted out by the chiefs. Those who could obeyed them, and, leaping

back, the boats in a body shoved off from us; but some unfortunate wretches were still clinging to our bulwarks. They fought as they clung with all the fanaticism of Mahomedans; but our seamen made quick work of them, and in less than two minutes not one was left alive. The gray light of dawn showed us the dark boats pulling in-shore, and as the sun arose its early beams lighted up the canvas of a man-of-war brig, close hauled, laying up towards us. Our people shouted lustily when they saw her; and Hearty, forgetting his wound and his begrimed and war-stained appearance, hurried below to assure his charges of their safety. We quickly recognized the 'Zebra,' and were not long in getting within hail of her, when Rullock, accompanied by Bubble, came on board of us, to inquire into the particulars of our adventure.

Old Rullock at first was somewhat inclined to be angry with us for getting so close in-shore; and Will almost pulled his hair off in his vexation that he had not been with us to share in the honours of the fight and defence.

Our loss had been serious; the poor fellow who had been the first wounded, had died just before sunrise; and the surgeon of the brig pronounced the other cases to be somewhat bad. Porpoise's was a flesh-wound—the advantage, as he observed, of being a fat

man; but he forgot that if he had not been fat he might not have been wounded at all. Hearty, though he made light of his hurt, was very much injured; and the surgeon, with a somewhat significant look, advised him to get on shore as fast as he could, and to get carefully nursed for a time.

"You'll have no great difficulty to get some one to nurse you," he remarked.

I really believe that he did not think so badly of the case as he pretended. Be that as it may, we made the best of our way to Malta harbour, where we all took up our abode on shore, while the cutter was undergoing some necessary repairs. The brig also requiring repairs, Rullock took lodgings, and in the most considerate way had Hearty conveyed to them, and invited his sister and niece to stay with him—a very indelicate proceeding, I dare say; but the jolly old sailor observed, "Who was so fit to look after a wounded man as the girl he was going to marry, and in whose defence he was wounded. A fig for all such rigmarole prudisms, say I." As the parties concerned did not disagree with him, so the matter was arranged to the satisfaction of everybody.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BACHELORS AT SEA.—THE IONIAN ISLANDS.—RETURN TO MALTA.—SAD NEWS.—HOMEWARD BOUND. — HORRIBLE SUSPICIONS. — THE PIRATE'S HANDY-WORK.—A BURNING SHIP.—TRACES OF OUR FRIENDS. —THE RESCUE.—THE BACHELORS BECOME BENEDICTS, AND THUS TERMINATES IN THE MOST SATISFACTORY MANNER IMAGINABLE THE CRUISE OF THE 'FROLIC.'

It took nearly two months before Hearty recovered even partially from his wound; and at the end of that time, the 'Frolic' being ready for sea, the surgeons insisted that to re-establish his health he must take a trip away for a few weeks in her. This proceeding became somewhat more necessary, as the 'Zebra' had been ordered off to the Levant, and he could not well remain the guest of Mrs. Mizen during Captain Rullock's absence. Among the lovely isles of Greece, then, it was resolved we would take a cruise. Both Carstairs and Bubble joined us: the former, in his usual way, had been carrying on with Mrs. Sky-

scraper; but the widow had been unable to hook him firmly; indeed, as Bubble observed, he was somewhat a big fish to haul on shore. He, on his part, also, could not tell whether the lady cared for him or not. In my opinion she did, but could not quite make up her mind to lose her liberty.

Once more we five jolly bachelors were afloat together, on our passage to Greece. Hearty was in fair spirits. The fresh air, after the confinement of a sick-room, raised them, in spite of himself; indeed, considering that he was certain of Laura's affection, and hoped in a few months to be united to her, though parted from her for a brief space, he had no reason to be melancholy. We had a fine run to the eastward. What words can describe the picturesque beauties of Corfu and the Albanian coast—the classic associations of Athens and the varied forms of the isles and islets scattered over the Ægean Sea! Bubble and I revelled in them; but it must be owned that Carstairs, and even Hearty, thought more of the wild fowl and snipes and woodcocks to be shot in the marshy valleys or thyme-covered heights, than of their pictorial effects or classic association.

Whenever we were at sea our people kept a very sharp look-out for Sandgate's polacca-brig, in the hopes that she might be cruising in those parts.

After, however, the various pranks he had played in the Mediterranean, I suspected that he would have shifted the scene of his exploits to some other part of the globe.

Greece and her islands, lovely and interesting as they are, have been so often described by more graphic pens than mine, that I do not think my readers would thank me for filling my pages with an account of what we saw.

We had not much personal communication with the Ionians. What we saw and what we heard of them did not raise them especially in our estimation. However, what could be expected of a race so long under the dominion of Venice, during the worst times of her always nefarious system of policy? By the Venetian system discord was fermented among all the states subject to Turkish rule, and miscreants of all classes who could help to effect that object were protected and supported. Crime was thus openly encouraged; the assassin who had committed ten murders was only sent to the galleys for the same number of years; and any one speaking disrespectfully of any person high in office was actually punished with the infliction of a like sentence. The young men of the noble families were brought up in Italy, and while they learned all her vices were taught to despise their native land, and

to forget their mother-tongue. Falsehood, revenge, a foolish vanity, a love of political intrigue, were but some of their most glaring vices; justice was openly sold; public faith was unknown; their peasants were grossly ignorant; their nobles were without honour; and their merchants were destitute of integrity; while their priests were generally illiterate and immoral in the extreme. *Heu mihi!* a pretty picture of a people. Well, I fancy they have improved somewhat under British protection; and when I was among them I do not believe they were so bad as all that. Still they were in an unsatisfactory state, and a very difficult people to govern. They may have improved still more now; and I hope they have.

We sailed about from island to island, and visited them all in their turn. First we went to that of the ancient Teleboans; once conquered by King Cephalus, who gave it his name, and whose descendants for many generations reigned over them—so Bubble informed us; and we were not a little interested in visiting various cyclopic remains, and among them those of the ancient city of Cranii. The island is very rugged and mountainous; the highest mountain, that of Montagna Negra, being upwards of three thousand feet above the level of the sea. We spent a couple of days also at the handsome city of Zante, the capital of the

island of that name, famous for the longevity of its inhabitants, and its currants, oil, wine, and fragrant honey. Santa Maura, once known as Leucadia, was our next resort. Little cared we for its classical recollections, but far more interested were we in visiting the tomb of the gallant Clarke, who fell under the walls of its fortress, which was attacked by the English in 1810, under General Oswald. The island is separated from the mainland by a narrow channel. There is a curious natural mole running out from the island, which has exactly the appearance of being the work of art. We all anticipated much pleasure in visiting Ithaca, the birthplace and patrimony of Ulysses; but when we got there none of us felt inclined to envy him his rugged, inhospitable-looking territory, and were not surprised that he was anxious to get a footing in a more fruitful portion of the globe. Still it is a very romantic and picturesque spot; and produces the vine, orange, lemon, and other fruits in abundance.

Pasco also we saw, once noted as a retreat for pirates, and Cerigo, and Cerigotto; and thus, having made the tour of the Septinsular republic, we sailed back to Malta, with the anticipation of a hearty welcome from the friends we had left behind there. How glittering white looked the houses of the city! how blue the water! how gay the caps and sashes and

jackets of the boatmen as they pulled about in their fancifully painted boats, and came vociferating alongside as we beat up the harbour of Valetta and dropped our anchor not far from the landing-place. We all of us hastened on shore; Hearty to see his betrothed, and I to take care of him; Carstairs to throw himself at the feet of Mrs. Skyscraper; Bubble, as he himself said, to see that no one got into mischief; and Porpoise to order certain stores for the cutter. Hearty and I walked up at once to Mrs. Mizen's lodgings. He knocked hurriedly at the door. Perhaps some of my readers know how a man feels under similar circumstances—I don't.

An Italian servant appeared, a stranger. "Que vuole, signori?" he asked.

"Are Mrs. or Miss Mizen at home?" inquired Hearty, in an agitated voice, not heeding the man's question. "Do you understand me? An English lady and her daughter?"

"Oh, capisco, capisco!" answered the Italian, running away up stairs.

I thought he was going to announce our arrival, but he speedily returned holding a letter. I saw that the address was in a lady's handwriting as he delivered it to Hearty. Hearty opened it with a trembling hand. His countenance assumed a look of blank dis-

appointment as he read its contents. As soon as he had glanced hurriedly through it, he began and read it over again; and then as he held it in his hand his eye still rested on it.

"What has occurred, my dear fellow?" I asked, anxiously.

I must confess,—and oh, my fair readers! don't be angry with me, an old bachelor,—I did truly suspect that it was the old story, and that the fair Laura had for some reason or other thought better of it; that she had heard something against her intended's character and believed it; or that Sir Lloyd Snowdon, or somebody else, whose metal was more attractive, had stepped in and cut him out. I say, these ideas glanced through my mind. They were very wrong and very disparaging to the sex, and most unjustifiable, and I was quite angry with myself for entertaining them, but I had seen so much that was bad in the world that they came in spite of me—I crave for pardon. I had also seen much that was good, and noble, and excellent; examples of the most devoted, self-sacrificing, all-enduring affection, and I ought at once to have remembered those examples and balanced them against all my evil suspicions. I did not, however, at that time; so I waited with no small amount of anxiety for Hearty's answer.

"They are gone," he replied; "gone away to England."

Then my suspicions are correct, I thought.

"It is a very sad case, I fear. Soon after we sailed Mrs. Mizen received notice of Tom Mizen's illness, and the next post brought out such alarming accounts that she and her daughter resolved at once to return home. A fine fast-sailing merchant-brig, the 'Success,' was on the point of sailing, so, as a journey by land through Italy and France would be injurious to Laura, they determined to go by her. What was their surprise on going on board to find the other berths occupied by Mrs. Seton and her daughter, and Mrs. Skyscraper, who, for some business matters connected with property left them, had to go to England. Miss Mizen wrote as they were on the point of sailing, and the people of the house took charge of the letter to deliver to me. She speaks in favourable terms of the brig and of the master, Captain Hutchins, so I trust that they may have a good passage home. But it is disappointing. You'll not mind, my dear fellow, sailing at once to follow them? I am afraid there is no chance of catching them at Gibraltar, but if the 'Frolic' behaves as well as usual we may get to England almost as soon as they do. Not that I wish that either—I would far rather the 'Success' had a speedy

passage. I am certain, also, Carstairs will be ready to start; and as for Bubble he'll wish to do what is reasonable; so I suppose there is nothing to prevent our sailing as soon as we have got a fresh supply of water, and a few more provisions on board."

I assured my friend that I was perfectly ready to go to sea that very hour if the necessary preparations for the voyage could be made; and volunteered at once to go in search of Porpoise, to hasten what was required to be done; while he himself went to his bankers, and settled a few bills he had left unpaid. On my way I encountered Carstairs, who had received no notice of the widow's departure, and was therefore still engaged in searching for her, as much puzzled as Hearty had at first been. I never saw a fellow more taken aback than he was when I communicated the truth to him, and he directly became all eagerness to put to sea. What his feelings were I cannot exactly tell. I suspect that his confidence in the durability of Mrs. Skyscraper's regard for him was not quite up to the mark of Hearty's for that of his intended.

"Why hasn't she written to me, to tell me what she was going to do, and why has she hurried away to England? Hang it, they are all alike, I suppose, and delight to make fools of us poor men. Now let us go and hunt up Porpoise. Bubble said he should tend to

him, while I was paying my visit to my—my—hang it, to the widow I mean."

Poor fellow, he was sadly put out I saw. Porpoise was soon found; and when he heard the state of the case he set to work as if life and death depended on it, in getting the cutter ready for a long voyage. He had plenty of lieutenants in us three gentlemen; and while one went off in one direction another started away in an opposite one, to order what was required, and to see the orders executed, while the crew did their part with right goodwill. Water and coals, and stores and provisions, were soon alongside, and quickly hoisted on board and stowed away below. Hearty was surprised, and highly gratified, when he got on board and found what was done.

"Where there's a will there's a way," is a very true saying; and "If you want a thing done, go and do it yourself," is another. The Portuguese say, "If you want a thing *go*, if you don't want a thing *send*."

That very evening, with a fair wind, we were running out of Malta harbour. Away glided the 'Frolic' over the moonlit Mediterranean, with every stitch of canvas she could carry set alow and aloft. We had a sharp look-out kept ahead so that we might avoid running down any boat, or running into any vessel; while the three landsmen agreed to keep watch with Porpoise;

and me to add to the number of hands on deck. Porpoise prognosticated a very rapid passage home, and certainly, from the way we commenced it, we had reason to hope that he would not prove a fallacious seer. We speedily lost sight of Malta, and its rocks and fortifications; with its scanty soil and swarthy population, and noisy bells, and lazy monks, without any very great regret on our part. We had altogether passed a pleasant, and not unexciting time there; and I, for my part, look back to those days with fewer regrets as to the way I spent them, than I do to some passed in other places. I am somewhat inclined to moralize. I must own that often and often I wish that I could live my early days over again, that I might employ them very differently to what I did. Deeply do I regret the precious time squandered in perfect idleness, or the most puerile frivolities, if not in absolute wickedness; time which might have been spent in acquiring knowledge which would have afforded the most intense and pure delight, in benefiting my fellow-creatures; which would have assuredly afforded me happiness and peace of mind in the consciousness that I was doing my duty. But ah! time has gone by never to be recalled; but happily it may be redeemed while health and strength and vigour of mind remain. Often have I thought to myself, "Why was I sent

into the world? Why was I endued with an intellect —with a heart to feel—a soul to meditate on things great and glorious—with powers of mind which I am conscious are but in embryo, and which but await separation from this frail body to comprehend some, if not all, the great mysteries of nature! Surely I was not placed here merely to kill time—to amuse myself—to employ my faculties in trifles; still less, to indulge myself in mere animal gratification. No, no; I am certain of that. I was sent here as a place of trial—as a school where I might learn my duties—as a preparation for a higher sphere. When I understood this, the great problem of existence was at once solved; difficulties vanished; the whole government of the world at once seemed right and just and reasonable; and my thoughts, feelings, tastes, and aspirations became changed. I was led to look upward as to the only source of happiness, and a pure and unfailing source it has ever since proved to me.

Brother yachtsmen who may glance your eye over these pages, meditate seriously on this matter. As you walk the deck on your midnight watch, looking up ever and anon into the dark sky where flit countless numbers of brilliant stars to guide you on your path across the ocean, ask yourself the question, "Why was I sent into this world?" and do not be satisfied

till you have found an answer, and resolved to profit by it.

I do not pretend that I thought much about this matter when I was on board the 'Frolic,' yet now and again some thoughts of the sort did flash across my mind, but my companions rallied me on my seriousness and they vanished.

But to my history:—Away sailed the saucy little 'Frolic' over the blue waters of the Mediterranean. We laughed, and sang, and chatted, much as usual, and Carstairs quoted to as good effect as in days of yore; but we failed entirely in our long stories, for our pens had been idle, and our imaginations were much at fault. What we might have done I do not know, had not a reality occurred which effectually put all fiction to flight.

We were about half way between Malta and Gibraltar, a succession of light winds having made old Snow confess that he was afraid his prognostications of a rapid passage were not likely to be realized, when one forenoon when I came on deck, I found Porpoise scrutinizing through his glass an object which he had discovered on the water, nearly right ahead of us.

"What is it, do you think?" I asked.

"I can't quite make out," he answered, handing me

the telescope. "It looks to me like the hull of a dismasted ship—an ugly thing to run foul of on a dark night with a heavy gale blowing."

"You are right as to its being a ship's hull, I am pretty certain," I answered. "We shall be up to it soon, and that will settle the question."

Some of the people, however, declared that what we saw was a rock or an island, and others that a dead whale had floated in through the Straits. As we approached, however, our opinion was found to be the correct one, and then it became a subject of discussion as to what she could be.

"She is a good sized craft, whatever she is," observed Hearty, who had joined us on deck. "Is she an English or foreign vessel do you think?"

"English by her build," replied Porpoise, observing her narrowly through the glass; "I cannot make it out. I see no one on board. How she came into that state puzzles me."

"My dear fellow, have you any idea what sort of a vessel the 'Success' is? Does any one on board know her?" exclaimed Hearty, suddenly turning pale, and literally trembling from head to foot, as all sorts of horrible suspicions and fears flashed through his mind.

Inquiries were made, but no one recollected to have

seen the brig in which our friends had taken their passage. We did our best to calm Hearty's apprehensions, but under the circumstances they were very natural, and in spite of all we could say, they rather increased than diminished, as we approached the wreck. Carstairs shared them, but, being of a far less excitable temperament, in a much less degree; indeed, Hearty seemed to look on him as being very callous and insensible, for not making himself as miserable as he felt.

The breeze was very light, and our progress seemed terribly slow, to the impatient feelings of our kind-hearted host. His glass was never for a moment off the wreck, indeed we were all of us constantly looking at her, in the hopes of seeing some one appear. The afternoon was drawing well on, before we got up to her. The instant we approached her, two boats were lowered, and Hearty and I jumped into the first, and away we pulled as fast as the men could bend to their oars—the men evidently entering fully into the feelings of their master. I went with him that I might really look after him, should his worst anticipations be realized. We were soon alongside, and in an instant scrambled on board.

The masts, and rigging, and sails, hung over the side; the former in their fall having carried away

the bulwarks, and smashed the boats. I saw before we got on board, that she had lost her masts with all sail set, in some unaccountably lubberly way it seemed. The sea had washed away some of her spare spars and the caboose, but she had apparently righted directly her masts went, and there seemed no reason why she should have been deserted by her crew. As we pulled up under the stern, we looked out for a name painted there, but a sail hung over it, and if there was a name it was not perceptible. Hearty, the moment he was on board, rushed with frantic haste along the deck, to ascertain the important fact, and very nearly fell overboard in his attempt to remove the sail, till others could aid him. The sail was soon dragged aside, and as we hung down over the tafferel, a large S appeared, there could be no doubt of it. There was the word 'Success' of London. I had to help my friend on board again.

"What can have happened! What can have happened!" he exclaimed, as soon as he could find words to speak.

"Why, I trust that they fancied the brig in a much worse condition than she appears to us to be, and that they quitted her in the boats, or some other craft which was fortunately passing soon after the catastrophe." But as I spoke, our eyes fell on the shattered

boats, and I recollected that the former hypothesis could not be correct. "They must have fallen in with some vessel," I remarked to Hearty. "The ladies were happily conveyed on board her, but why the crew deserted the ship I cannot say."

"But where can they have gone to—what port can they have put into—what sort of vessel can they be on board?" exclaimed Hearty, almost frantic with agitation. "It's very dreadful."

By this time the other boat had got alongside, with Carstairs, Bubble, and Porpoise in her. Together we commenced a search over the deserted vessel. The appearance of the cabin again raised our doubts as to the reason of the desertion. The ladies had evidently been at work just before the catastrophe. Their work-baskets were on the floor, with their work, in which needles were sticking; and needle-cases, thimbles, and reels of cotton, skeins of silk, and worsted, and similar articles were strewed about.

As I looked more minutely into the state of affairs, I observed that everything of value had been carried off; not a silver spoon or fork, not a piece of plate of any description remained. The ladies' jewels were all gone. This was what was to be expected, but I was also certain that they would not leave their daily work behind. I did not increase Hearty's apprehensions by

pointing this out to him. Carstairs all the time, though he took matters in a very different way, seemed to be much alarmed and anxious. I saw that the chronometer, sextants, charts, compasses, and everything in the captain's cabin had been carried off. The ship's log and manifest could nowhere be found, nor indeed could any of her papers.

From the cabin we went to the hold, and there also the cargo had evidently been disturbed, and I judged that a considerable quantity had been carried away; a few bales of silk and velvets only remaining. This was a very suspicious circumstance. Still had there been time to remove anything the captain would of course have carried away what was likely to be of most value. The fore-peak was next searched. The seamen's chests had been broken open, and the contents of many of them were strewed about—why the men did not use their keys was surprising. Still in their hurry they might not have had time to find them. Hearty went about looking into every hole, and making his observations on all he saw. He had collected everything belonging to the ladies as treasured relics, and had them packed and conveyed on board the 'Frolic,' while Carstairs took charge of all Mrs. Skyscraper's property, and sighed over it with a look of despair, and we were about to quit the vessel, when

one of the men declared that he heard a voice proceeding from the fore-hold. Forward we all went again. Certainly there was a groan. Guided by the sound, and by removing some of the cargo, we arrived at a space where lay a human being. We lifted him up, and carried him out of the dark noisome hole, and the fresh air speedily revived him. At first his startled look showed that he did not know what to make of us, but by degrees he recovered his senses, though his first words increased our apprehensions.

"What! are you come back again? Don't murder me!—Don't murder me!" he exclaimed, with a look of terror.

"Murder you, mate! What should put that into your head?" asked one of our men, who was supporting him.

By pouring a little brandy and water down his throat, he in a short time recovered altogether. He told us that he had been the cook of the brig. He was an old man, and almost worn out, and that this was to have been his last voyage.

"Well, gentlemen," he continued, "when I see a number of young ladies come on board, and their mothers to look after them, and no parson to make Davy Jones angered like, which he always is when any on 'em gets afloat, says I to myself, we shall have a

fine run of it home, and the chances are that the 'Success' will make a finer passage than she ever did before. Well, we hadn't been two days at sea before we falls in with a polacre brig, which speaks us quite civil like, and a man aboard, though he was rigged like a Greek, asks us in decent real English, quite civil like, what passengers we'd got aboard. So thinking no harm, we told him, and he answered 'that he'd keep us company, and protect us, for that to his knowledge, there was a notorious pirate cruising thereabouts, and that if he fell in with us he might do us an injury.' The captain did not seem much to like our new friend, and would rather have been without his company, but as he sailed two knots to our one, we couldn't help ourselves, do ye see. For two days or more he kept close to us, and then it fell almost a calm, and what does he do, but quietly range up alongside with the help of some sweeps he had, and before we knew where we were, he had thrown some twoscore or more of cut throats aboard of us, who knocked some of our crew down, drove others overboard, and very soon got possession of the brig. I was ill below, but I popped my head up to see what was happening, and when I found how things were going, thinks I to myself, the best thing I can do is to be quiet; if they cut my throat, they may as well do

it while I'm comfortably in bed as struggling away on deck. Instead, however, of turning into my berth again, I thought that I'd just go and stow myself away in the hold under the cargo, where they wouldn't be likely to look for me, so there I went, and there I've been ever since. I felt the ship some time afterwards thrown on her beam ends, and thought she'd be going down, but she very soon righted. I felt the masts shaken out of her, but I could not tell what else had happened. I tried to get out to see, but the cargo had shifted and jammed me in so tight, that I couldn't break my way out. I suppose I should have died if you hadn't come to help me, gentlemen."

"But can you not tell what became of the passengers and crew?" exclaimed Hearty, interrupting him.

"No more than the babe unborn, sir," answered the old man; "I suppose they were all carried aboard the pirate. From what I know of some of our crew, I don't think they would have much minded joining the villains, and several I myself saw killed, and hove overboard."

This fearful information gave us still more concern than we had felt from what we had already discovered. There was some cause for hope before, now there was none. There was no doubt whatever that our friends had fallen into the power of the villain Miles

Sandgate. Grown desperate, it was impossible to say to what extremes he might not venture to go. Still I had less apprehension for the fate of Mrs. and Miss Mizen than for that of Jane Seton. It could scarcely be expected that he would again let her out of his power. I was offering what consolation I could to Hearty as well as to Carstairs on these grounds, in which I was joined by Bubble, whose heart was overflowing with commiseration for them and those they were so deeply interested in, when Hearty suddenly exclaimed—

"But, my dear fellow, is it not possible that the same squall which struck this vessel and reduced her to a wreck may have struck the pirate, and sent her and all on board to the bottom? or can you answer me that this is not possible? Still it may have preserved them from a worse fate. Oh, horrible! horrible!"

"I do not think it is probable that people so thoroughly acquainted with these seas should not have been forewarned in time to guard against even the most sudden squall. There are always some indications; only those who do not regard them are the sufferers. Just as likely after he had rifled the brig, Sandgate (for I do not doubt that he is the culprit) may have put the passengers on shore somewhere or other, and made some plausible excuse for having taken them

on board his vessel. I think, in truth, that for the sake of making friends at court, he is much more likely to have treated them with perfect civility than to have ventured in any way to insult or injure them."

All the time I was trying to persuade myself that I was speaking what I thought, but I must own that I had very serious apprehensions for their safety. There was no object in remaining longer on board the wreck. To prevent any vessels running into her, for that night at all events, we secured a large lantern with a burner full of oil to the stump of the mainmast. We were very unwilling to quit her, but we could not venture to leave anybody on board to look after her till we could despatch a vessel to bring her into Gibraltar, lest before this could be done a gale might spring up and she might founder. So, taking Tom Pancake, the old man we had found, on board with us, we returned to the cutter. We forthwith held a council of war, when it was resolved to steer a direct course for Gibraltar, that we might then get vessels sent out in all directions to look for the daring pirate. I never saw any one suffer so much as did Hearty. A few nights of the anxiety he was now doomed to suffer would, I feared much, not only turn his head grey, but completely prostrate him. Carstairs suffered a good deal, but his regard for Mrs. Skyscraper was of a very dif-

ferent character to the deep affection Hearty entertained for Miss Mizen; and if he was to lose her I suspected that he would have no great difficulty in supplying her place as the queen of his affections. No sooner had we left the unfortunate ship than a fresh breeze had sprung up, and before sunset we had run her completely out of sight. For all the first part of the night the breeze lasted, and we made good way on our course for Gibraltar. For a long time poor Hearty would not turn in; but at last I persuaded him to lie down and take some of that rest which he so much required. I also went below, but I was restless, and just as the middle-watch was set I returned on deck. Porpoise and Bubble were there. I found them watching a bright glare which appeared in the sky. I considered a moment our whereabouts.

"That must be from a ship on fire," I exclaimed.

"There is no doubt about it," replied Porpoise. "She has been blazing away for the last hour or more I fear, for all that time I have observed that ruddy glow in the sky. I hope we may be in time to render some assistance to the unfortunate crew."

The wind freshened even still more as we advanced towards the burning ship, but not enough for our impatience. Hearty and Carstairs were called, and when they came on deck they exhibited equal eager-

ness with the rest of us; indeed Hearty seemed for a time almost to forget his own anxiety in his zeal in the cause of humanity. Surely we seldom know even our most intimate friends without seeing them tried under a variety of circumstances. Sometimes I must own that I have been sadly disappointed in them, at other times I have been as agreeably surprised by the exhibition of self-denial, courage, warmth of heart, and judgment which I did not believe to exist in them. Such was the case with my friend Hearty.

We got the boats ready to lower the instant we should be close enough to the vessel. The interval which elapsed before we drew up to her was one of great anxiety. All sorts of ideas and fears crossed our minds, and at all events we felt that many of our fellow-creatures might be perishing for want of our assistance. Through our glasses, as we drew on, we discovered that the greater part of the vessel was enveloped in flames; the poop alone was not entirely consumed, though the devouring element had made such progress that the people were already seeking for a momentary safety by hanging on to the taffrail quarters.

"Stand by to shorten sail!" sang out Porpoise.

The squaresail and gaff and square-topsail were taken in, and the foresail being hauled up to windward

and the jib sheets let fly, the cutter was hove-to and a boat instantly lowered. As before, Hearty and I went in her, while the other gig immediately followed us.

Our appearance took the poor wretches by surprise, as from the darkness of night our approach had not been perceived. They raised a cry to implore us to hasten to their assistance. Our men shouted in return, they needed no cry to urge them to exertion. By the bright glare of the flames we saw that the men clinging to the wreck were by their costume Greeks, while the hull itself had a foreign appearance. The vessel was a brig we observed. The foremast had already fallen, the flames were twisting and twining in serpentine forms along the yards and up to the very maintopgallantmast head. Some, as I said, were still clinging to the wreck, others had leaped overboard, and were hanging on to spars and oars and gratings, and a few were in a boat floating near the vessel, but she appeared to be stove in, and to have no oars or other means of progression.

With all these people, blinded with terror and eager to save their lives, it was necessary to use much precaution to prevent ourselves from being swamped by too many leaping on board at a time. The first thing was to rescue those who were in the most imminent

danger of being burned. While we pulled under the stern and as the people dropped into the water picked them up, the other boat hauled those on board who were already floating, and seemed most to require help. We had got most of the people off the burning wreck, but two still hung on to the burning taffrail, and seemed unwilling to trust themselves in the sea.

"Never fear, jump, jump, my lads!" sung out our men; then turning to the Greeks whom they had saved, added, "Tell them to jump in your own lingo; they don't understand us."

The Greeks said something about "Inglesi," but I did not understand what they meant. At last, however, the flames rushing out from the stern ports and along the deck, gave them no alternative, and they had to throw themselves into the water, whence we quickly picked them out, and with a boat loaded almost to sinking returned on board the cutter.

I was especially struck by the appearance of the two men last saved. Certainly they were much more like Englishmen than Greeks. No sooner, however, did the old man we had saved from the 'Success' see them than he exclaimed, "What, mates! is that you? How did you get aboard there? Why, as I live, that craft must be the Greek pirate which plundered us, and carried off the ladies."

The worst suspicions which had been floating through my mind were confirmed by these remarks. Poor Hearty seemed thunderstruck. Carstairs had not yet returned. The men could not deny their identity, and they instantly began to offer excuses for having been on board the Greek.

"Never mind that!" exclaimed Hearty. "Tell me, my men, where are the ladies? what has become of them? Help us to find them, and all will be overlooked. They could not have been left to perish on board the burning vessel."

"We can't say much about it, sir," answered one of the men, who seemed to be the most intelligent. "We were forward when the fire broke out, and it was with great difficulty that we managed to crawl aft. When we got there we found that a raft had been built and lowered into the water, and that the boats had been got out, and that several people were in them. Some got away, and we don't know where they went, but we towed two of them after us. One was swamped and went down, and the other, as you saw, was stove in. What became of the other two we don't know; we believe that the ladies were in them, but we can't say for certain; all we know is, that we did not see them on the deck, or in either of the other two boats, when we got aft; still we believe that nearly

half the people on board, in one way or another, have been lost."

Then supposing the seaman spoke the truth there was still hope; but how dreadful at the best must be the condition of our friends, exposed in open boats with the most lawless of companions! While we were still examining the men Carstairs and the rest returned on board. He had also with him one of the crew of the 'Success,' who on being examined corroborated the statement of the other two. The character of the men whose lives we had preserved was now clear; but, wretches as they were, and deserving of the heaviest punishment, we could not have avoided saving them from drowning, even had we known the worst at first. Scarcely were they all on board before every portion of the burning vessel was enveloped in flames. Porpoise all the time was fortunately not forgetful of the safety of the cutter; and having let draw the foresail, we had been standing away from her. Suddenly there was a fiercer blaze than before—a loud deafening report was heard, the remaining mast and deck lifted, the former, shooting up into the air like a skyrocket surrounded by burning brands, and then down again came the whole fiery mass, covering us, even at the distance we were, with burning fragments of wreck, and then all was darkness and not a remnant of the

polacca-brig remained together above water. After the character we had heard of the rescued crew, without giving them any warning, we suddenly seized them, and, lashing their arms behind them, and their legs together, made them sit down in a row under the bulwarks. They seemed to be very much surprised at the treatment, but we did not understand their expostulations, and should not have listened to them if we had. We however served out provisions to them, and they very soon seemed reconciled to their fate. The three English seamen vowed that they had been kept on board the brig by force, and as we would fain have believed this to be the case, we did not treat them as prisoners, though we kept a very sharp eye on their movements; so, especially, did old Pancake, who appeared to have no little dread lest they should play him some scurvy trick in return for his having betrayed them.

These arrangements were very quickly made. The most important consideration, however, was the best method to pursue in order to discover what had become of the raft reported to have been made, and the missing boat. Unless by those who have been placed in a similar situation, the nervous anxiety and excitement which almost overcame every one of us would be difficult to be conceived. Hearty thought

of sending the boats away to range in circles round the spot, in the chance of falling in with the raft or boat; but Porpoise overruled this proposal by assuring him that the raft could only have gone to leeward, and that the boat probably would be found in the same direction. Keeping, therefore, a bright look-out, with a light at our mast-head, we kept tacking backwards and forwards so as to sweep over every foot of the ground to leeward of the spot where the fire first burst out. We had hinted to the English seamen taken from the pirate that their future prospects depended very much on the success which might attend our search. They accordingly gave us all the information and assistance in their power by showing us how the pirate had steered from the moment the fire was discovered; and how far she had gone after her captain had placed the ladies on the raft. Nothing could we discover during the night. Hearty was in despair; so was Carstairs; only he was rather inclined to be savage than pathetic in his misery. Daylight came: as the dawn drew on nothing could be seen but the clear gray water surrounding us. Then, just as we had gone about and were standing once more to the westward, the sun rose from his ocean bed, his beams glancing on a small object seen far away on our port bow.

"Huzza! huzza!" shouted Bubble, who was the first to bring his glass to bear on it. "Some people on a raft! There is no doubt on the subject. White dresses, too! It may be the ladies! It must be! Oh, it can't be otherwise! Keep up your spirits, Hearty, my dear fellow; all will go well! It will, Carstairs, I tell you! Don't be cast down any more! I think I see them waving!"

Thus the worthy Bubble ran on, giving way to the exuberance of his feelings and sympathy for his friends. Every yard of canvas the cutter could carry was pressed on her, and each moment rapidly decreased our distance from the raft; for that a raft it was, or a piece of a wreck, there could be no doubt. Our telescopes were kept unchangeably fixed on it. It was with no little apprehension, however, as we drew nearer, that I perceived that there were but three persons on it. One was standing up; the other two were seated on benches, or chests, or something of the same size, secured to the raft. The figure standing up was that of a man in the Greek costume; the other two were females. I had little doubt in my own mind who they were. As we got still nearer I fancied that under the Greek cap I could distinguish the features of Miles Sandgate. The features of the ladies were more difficult to make out, but I heard Hearty exclaim, "Yes,

it is her—it is her!" meaning Miss Mizen; and I felt sure he was right. But who was the other person? The figure was not like that of either Mrs. Mizen or Mrs. Seton, but whether it was Jane Seton or Mrs. Skyscraper was the question. Poor Carstairs, he must have felt that in all probability it was Miss Seton. What would Sandgate do when he found himself thus completely brought to bay? It was a serious question, for he had the two ladies entirely in his power, and, had he chosen, might, holding them as hostages, make any terms with us he pleased. I saw him watching the approaching cutter. He must have recognized her as soon as she hove in sight. Yet he did not quail, but stood up boldly confronting us. Then he seemed to be addressing one of the ladies. I looked again; I was certain she was Jane Seton: and I clearly recognized Miss Mizen. Jane had given her hand to Laura. The pirate seemed to be urging her to fulfil some request; he half knelt before her with uplifted hands; then he sprang up, with a look of bitter reproach. By this time the cutter was close up to the raft, and a boat was on the point of being lowered. Again, with an imploring gesture, the pirate urged his suit. Miss Seton shook her head. He seized her hand. She struggled violently. It appeared that in his rage he was about to drag her into

the water. He would have succeeded, had not Miss Mizen held her hand and drawn her back.

Hearty and Bubble were in the boat pulling rapidly to the raft. The pirate let go Miss Seton's hand, and drew himself up to his full height; he seemed to be uttering some strong reproaches. The bows of the boat were almost touching the raft, the oars were thrown in. At that moment the pirate, uttering a fearful cry (and if ever I heard the cry of a madman that was one), turned round, and plunged headlong into the water. Down, down, he sank! Scarcely an eddy marked where he had sprung in, with such determination had he endeavoured to reach the bottom. I watched for him, but he never rose again. Such was the dreadful end of Miles Sandgate. The next moment Hearty was on the raft and had clasped Laura Mizen in his arms, while Miss Seton was borne fainting into the boat by Bubble. They were quickly conveyed on board, while the raft and its freight were allowed to go adrift. The two young ladies were immediately carried to the cabin, where Laura rapidly described to Hearty all that had occurred. Poor Miss Seton, however, required their whole attention, and for the moment drew them off from all thoughts about themselves. Not that Miss Mizen for a moment forgot her mother and her other companions, and it was a relief to us all

to find that she had seen them placed in the first boat which had left the vessel just before they had been carried by Sandgate to the raft. He intended, it seemed, to have taken possession of one of the other boats, and when she was swamped he managed to get on the raft, and clear away from the burning vessel before any one else reached it, while he left the rest of his companions in crime to perish without an attempt to afford them aid. The general opinion was that the boat would be steered to the southward for the purpose of making the Moorish coast, where the pirates fancied that they might find protection.

"The chances are that they will all get murdered if they reach it," observed Porpoise, "but we must try and catch them up before they get there."

Fortunately we had the whole day before us. All sail was again made on the cutter; the sun rose high in the heavens; tolerably hot came down its beams on our heads. At noon a meridional observation was taken, and just as we were shutting up our sextant, Bubble, who was keeping a sharp look-out on every side, sang out that he saw a speck on the water almost ahead of us. I went immediately with my glass aloft. After waiting a little time I made out distinctly that the speck was a boat. As we drew on we made out that the boat was strongly manned, and

that the people in her were doing their utmost to keep ahead of us. They could not have known what the 'Frolic' was made of to suppose that they had a chance of escaping. The breeze freshened. Hard as they were pulling, hand over hand we came up with them. There were women in the boat, or we should have sent a shot after her to stop her way; we ran a gun out to frighten them. On we stood; the women in the boat now first observed us.

"Oh, help us! help us! help us!" they shrieked out.

We required no summoning, however. There were three ladies, we saw, the number we expected to find. We soon ran up alongside the boat, though it required nice steering not to sink her. Our earnest hopes and wishes were realized. In the stern-sheets sat Mrs. Mizen and Mrs. Seton, and to the very great relief of poor Carstairs the fair Mrs. Skyscraper. The pirates saw that they had not a prospect of escape, so they threw in their oars and quietly allowed us to get alongside them, and to hook on their boat to us. I need not describe the joy of the two mothers at finding their daughters safe, or that of the daughters at seeing their mothers; nor will I do more than touch on the effect which the risk she had endured, and the satisfaction Carstairs displayed at having her restored to him, worked on the heart of the widow.

We very soon got to Gibraltar, where we at once landed our very troublesome prisoners. Mrs. Mizen had written to England to desire that letters might be sent to meet her there. In a day or so they arrived, and they gave so favourable an account of her son's health, that as there was no necessity for her hurrying home, she was able to wait till we were at liberty to accompany her, having given our evidence against the pirates. Several of them suffered, as the papers say, the extreme penalty of the law, and it was certainly a pity, for the sake of justice, that Miles Sandgate had not been alive to keep them company. At length we all reached England, and not long afterwards I had the satisfaction of seeing my friend Edward Hearty united to Miss Laura Mizen, and the next week was called away to act as bestman to Captain Carstairs on his marriage with the fair relict of the late Lieutenant Skyscraper, of the Rifle Brigade.

Poor Miss Seton suffered much from the severe trial she had gone through. It was, I rejoice to say, not without good effects, and I had the opportunity of observing a great improvement in her character. Some years passed by, during which she remained single, but on the death of her mother she became the wife of Sir Lloyd Snowdon; and living constantly on his estate in Wales, proved a blessing to her family,

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